Athletics

Future looks Greene

Duncan Mackay in Athens

MAURICE GREENE ushered in a new era for United States sprinting when he became the first American since Carl Lewis in 1991 to win a major 100 metres title with his triumph in the World Championships in the Olympic Stadium here last Sunday.

Greene, aged 22, claimed the $60,000 first prize after beating the defending champion Donovan Bailey following a bullet-like start that catapulted him to a time of 9.86 seconds, equalling the championship record set by Lewis in Tokyo six years ago. The consolation for Bailey, who finished 0.05sec behind Greene, was that his world record of 9.84sec survived as the warm weather gave way to cool, overcast conditions.

But there was only disappointment for Ato Boldon, Greene's training partner. Once again, his pre-race prediction of victory in a world-record time turned out to be a hollow one.

The Trinidadian, who had missed Bailey's mark by 0.03sec in the heats, finished fifth in 10.02sec after suffering from cramp. Tim Montgomery, Greene's US team-mate, took bronze in 9.94sec.

Two hours earlier the curtain had gone up on what is always one of the best pieces of theatre in sport when Boldon sailed through to the final while Darren Campbell finished eighth in 10.37sec. That left Britain without a representative in the last eight in this event for the first time in the championship's history.

In the next semi-final, Greene and Bailey, running in adjacent lanes, eyeballed each other as they crossed the line. Bailey, showing no ill-effects from the cramp which seemed to affect him in the opening rounds, clocked 9.91sec.

Bailey was defiant in defeat. "I'm a fighter," he said. "Until 60 metres I was fine, then another Bailey was running. I'm not looking for excuses, I've just had too many problems this season."

Greene's rise to the top began last September when his father spent two days driving him across America, from Kansas to Los Angeles, to join the coach John Smith, whose training group includes Boldon and José-Marie Pérec.

He was so unknown at the start of the season that he did not merit a mention in the ATFS annual, the sport's handbook of statistics. But then he had been knocked out in the heats in Gothenburg in 1995 and until less than two months ago had not broken 10sec. Now he is the third-fastest man in history. "Someone had to take charge of American sprinting and it fell to me," Greene said.

There was also the coronation of a new American queen in the women's 100 metres when the 21-year-old Californian Marion Jones completed an equally remarkable journey with victory by 0.02sec over the Ukraine's Zhanna Pintussevich in 10.83sec. It had seemed a precocious teenage talent was lost to the sport when Jones took up a basketball scholarship, but she returned to the track last year.

There had been controversy before the race when Merlene Ottey failed to hear the recall gun after a false start. She completed 60 metres before the crowd alerted her to the mistake. The energy expended took its toll second time round and she finished seventh.

There was an exciting trailer for the big production when Germany's Heinz Weis snatched the gold medal in the hammer from the Ukraine's Andrei Skvaruk with 81.78m on the final throw.

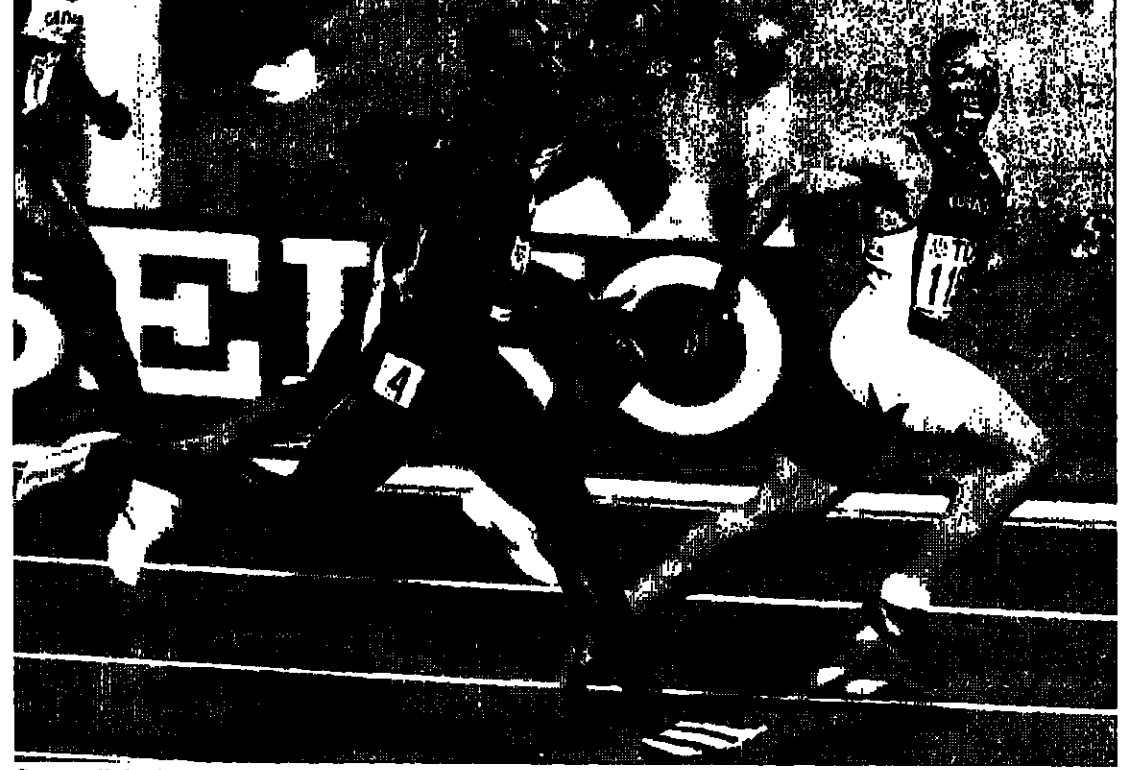
Weis stopped for a moment at the shot put circle during his lap of honour to encourage his team-mate Sabine Braun as she tried to extend her lead over Denise Lewis in the heptathlon. His euphoria clearly rubbed off because Braun threw a personal-best 15.08m.

Lewis hit back by adding 19cm to her own best of 14.36m, but at the end of the first day the Briton was lying fourth, 121 points behind the 1991 world champion, having suffered in the 100m hurdles when she clattered the seventh barrier.

On the second day Lewis did well in her specialist events — the long jump and javelin — but the gap in the 800 metres was too large to close, and she had to settle for silver behind Braun's gold.

Australia's Cathy Freeman overcame a bad draw in lane one to take the women's 400m title in 49.77sec. The Aboriginal athlete defied the tight bends to hold off the fast-finishing Sandie Richards of Jamaica.

There was an upset in the men's 400m hurdles when Stephane Diagana of France beat the favourite Bryan Bronson to claim gold in 47.70sec. South Africa's Llewellyn Herbert took the silver.



Greece lightning . . . Maurice Greene celebrates as he beats Canada's Donovan Bailey (centre) to break the tape in the 100 metres final in 9.86 seconds PHOTOGRAPH GARY HERSHORN

Cryptic crossword by Janus

Across

1 Deed in battle (6)
4 Cut short a game (7)
9 Cruel German emissary coming round later? (9)
10 Alternative part of regular beat (5)
11 Soldier putting back game in ice-house (5)
12 Confession at modern religious settlement (9)
13 Willing to try cooked tea (7)
15 Card-holding merchant? (6)
17 Just claims or oral ceremonies (6)
19 Sat again and rested (7)
22 Stories of kinsfolk (9)
24 Rare single extract from turpentine residue (5)
26 Said to be correct pen (5)
27 Run down rating swimming in river (9)
28 He might be expecting supporters to hold one (7)
29 Very large quarry for a bird (6)

Down

1 A believer and an unbeliever (7)
2 Hang behind on track (5)
3 Manipulator causing tea-shop to fold (9)
4 Adopted and taken for granted (7)
5 Capital way round disturbances (5)
6 Name ships by the book (9)
7 Stretch former nurse (6)
8 Ambassador providing the French with an opening (6)
14 Sheltering many in shepherd's hut (9)
16 When father rejected sugar as table delicacy (9)
18 A foot of water in bishop's patch (7)
19 One of 5 needing putting down? (6)
20 Studies cathedral closely (7)
21 Savage-sounding yarn (6)
23 Discuss pleasure excursion (5)
25 Step teacher accepts thanks for (5)

Last week's solution

D	O	O	R	M	A	T		P	E	R	U	S	E	D
E		S		E		A		L		I		P		I
P	O	S	E	R		C	O	U	R	T	S	H	I	P
A		I		C		I		T		Z		E		L
R	E	F	R	A	C	T	I	O	N		A	R	G	O
T		Y		N				C		E		O		M
				T	O	W	E	R	O	F	P	I	S	A
O		E		I		H		A		F		D		T
F	I	D	E	L	C	A	S	T	R	O				
F		E		E		L				R		M		S
S	I	N	G		S	E	C	R	E	T	V	I	C	E
T		T		U		M		O		L		L		T
A	P	A	R	T	H	E	I	D		E	V	I	C	T
G		T		A		A		E		S		E		L
E	Y	E	S	H	O	T		O	B	S	C	U	R	E

Rugby Union Tri-Nations Championship

Knox sweeps Boks aside

Greg Growden in Brisbane

DAVID KNOX's return had the desired effect on Australia. It reminded them how to play adventurous football and prompted a morale boosting and resounding 32-20 victory over South Africa at Suncorp Stadium last Saturday.

It was a brave move of Australia's selectors to recall Knox from Durban to replace the injured Tim Horan at fly-half, but it worked. The Wallabies were transformed, playing with the attacking zeal which made them a world force in the early nineties.

It also proved that the selectors were on the wrong track in trying to turn Horan from a world-class centre into a fly-half almost overnight. During that experimental period, Australia's back line play was unimpressive and predictable, often wasting opportunities by focusing on driving through the midfield, close to the ruck or maul, or turning the attack back inside towards the forwards.

With the return of a playmaker, Australia were able to change attacking options and make proper use of their excellent wings, Joe Roff and Ben Tune.

Relishing the chance to play with two Australian Capital Territory team-mates, the scrum-half George Gregan and James Holbeck at centre, Knox kick-started the back line, enabling the Wallabies to have the game won at half-time when they led 26-10 having scored four tries, including a double from Tune.

Knox varied his game perfectly, throwing the back hand pass when required to wrongfoot the South African defence and kicking when the moment demanded. So often criticised for his poor defence, he even was involved in the occasional tackle.

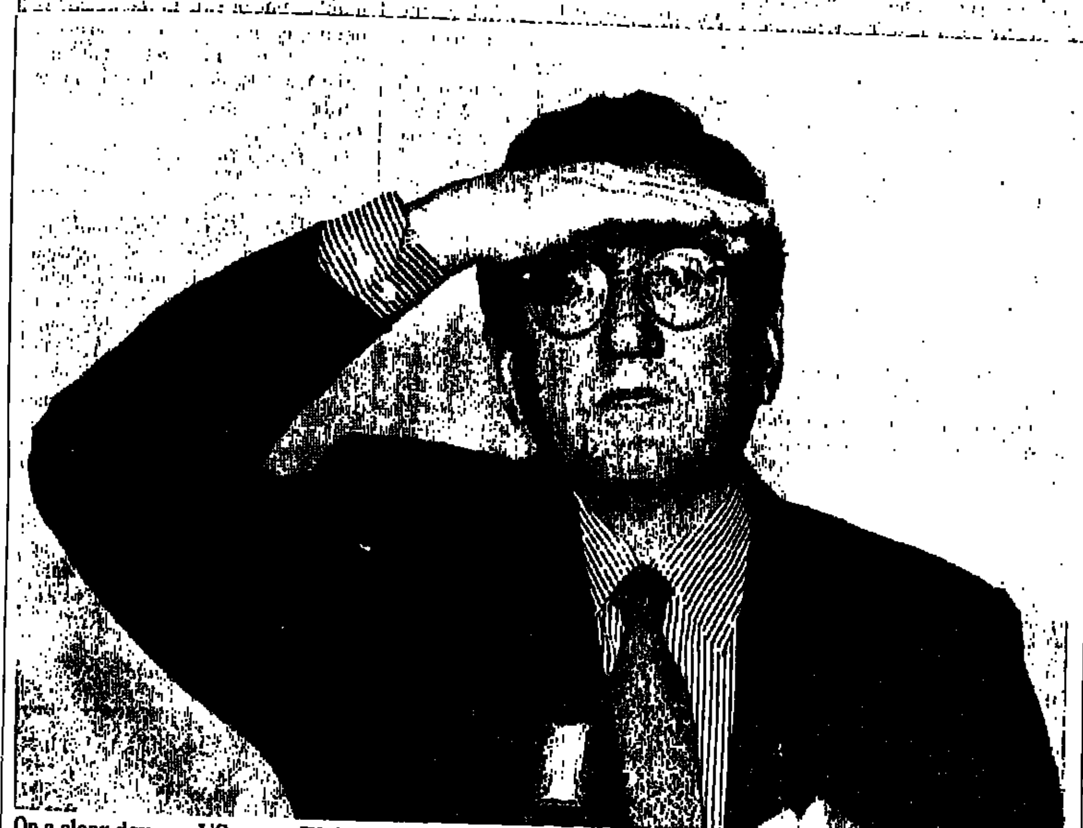
"It was made a lot easier for me that a few blokes out there did the tackling for me, like David Wilson, James Holbeck and Brett Robinson. So I had plenty of energy left when I got the ball," Knox said.

In contrast to Australia, South Africa have suffered an alarming drop in standards since being narrowly beaten by the All Blacks in Johannesburg three weeks ago. Their defence was extremely poor and they lacked the hard-headed arrogance which characterised past Springbok sides. Australia had done their research and exploited the weakness of the South African defensive line at half and in the centre.

Australia directed many of their attacks through that area and South Africa rarely provided any resistance.

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On a clear day . . . US envoy Richard Holbrooke at a Belgrade press conference PHOTO: IVAN MILUTINOVIC

Serb ally vows to oust Karadzic

Karen Coleman in Sarajevo

RICHARD HOLBROOKE, the US diplomat who was architect of the Dayton peace accords, ended his brief visit to Belgrade last weekend saying he had extracted a promise that the indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic will finally disappear from Bosnian politics.

Mr Holbrooke said Momcilo Krajisnik, the hardline Serb member of the Bosnian presidency, "offered a unilateral undertaking" to fulfil the agreement of July last year which Mr Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb leader, had "shredded".

Under the deal, Mr Karadzic stepped down as Bosnian Serb president and was supposed to quit politics. But he did not. Rather, he has managed to run the Republika Srpska from his headquarters in Pale, flouting the Dayton accords and persistently undermining his successor as president, Biljana Plavsic.

A senior source said Mr Holbrooke gave no deadline for Mr Krajisnik to make good his promise about Mr Karadzic, but said that it "would not be for ever".

"Are we satisfied?" Mr Holbrooke said. "Of course not. There has been no change on the American position — indicted war criminals must be brought to justice."

Observers believe Mr Karadzic's days are now numbered. Increasingly, whatever advantages the Serbs may accrue by protecting him seem to be outweighed by the costs.

In what remains of Yugoslavia there are also doubts that the Yugoslav strongman, Slobodan Milosevic, could stomach another round of economic sanctions — this time for failing to deliver Mr Karadzic to international justice.

For much of his visit Mr Holbrooke insisted that Mr Karadzic must hand himself over for trial at The Hague. He dismissed the idea that he could be tried in the Republika Srpska, a suggestion Mr Karadzic himself made to the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung last week.

There are, however, three key individuals who may not be keen to see Mr Karadzic make the trip to the Netherlands. One is Mr Karadzic himself. The second is Mr Milosevic, who may find it somewhat disturbing to have Mr Karadzic perhaps testifying that it was he, the Yugoslav leader, who gave the orders for atrocities against Muslims. The third is Mr Krajisnik, who played a powerful role in the Serb leadership during the conflict.

The dilemma Mr Karadzic's situation poses for other Serb leaders has led to speculation about how convenient some might find it if he were to suffer a fatal "accident".

Thais bailed out in $16bn rescue deal

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

THAILAND is to receive credit amounting to more than $16 billion from the International Monetary Fund and Pacific rim countries in what is the biggest loan to a single nation since the rescue of Mexico two years ago.

But news of the Thai bail-out, stitched together at a meeting in Tokyo and expected to help firm up a shaky baht, came as already jittery investors' worries about neighbouring Malaysia's economy saw a sharp fall in the ringgit.

Under agreements reached on Monday with the Thai finance minister, Thanong Bidaya, the IMF and Japan will each provide credit of $4 billion, four other countries — Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore — will each provide $1 billion, and South Korea and Indonesia will each put up $500 million.

China is also considering joining the rescue — and its contribution, together with credit expected from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank — could make a further $3 billion available to Thailand's embattled authorities. The United States, the lead player in Mexico's rescue, has said it will support the package for Thailand through its role in the IMF.

Much of the credit, which exceeds the amount specified in previous discussions, is expected to go towards shoring up Thailand's foreign reserves. The Thai central bank reported last week that, as of the end of July, these still stood at more than $32 billion. "In a technical sense, the figures may be accurate," a Western banker in Bangkok commented. "But you don't go to the IMF if you have that much in your reserves."

For many investors the crucial issue is not the size of credits but the ability of the IMF to establish full control over an economy in which policy and practice have been heavily shaped by political and vested interests.

The skyscrapers on Bangkok's skyline, once a sign of Thailand's place at the centre of Asia's boom, are now conspicuous symbols of a shocking and, for investors, unnerving bust.

The closure of 42 finance companies last week was a warning sign. The closures caused pandemonium and panic throughout the financial community, and the public is wondering where the rot will stop.

They are paying the price for what economists now see as a foolhardy binge. Thailand is nursing close to $90 billion in foreign debt, some $70 billion belonging to private companies. When Mexico hit financial rocks two years ago, its ratio of loans to GDP was around 45 per cent. In Thailand it is nearer 125 per cent.

The government has already agreed in principle to swingeing budget cuts and a rise in value added tax from 7 to 10 per cent. But as the US Deputy Treasury Secretary, Lawrence Summer remarked last week, another important ingredient is "greatly improved transparency" in management of the economy.

The prime minister, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, took office eight months ago promising to reverse the slump left by a government that Thais regarded as one of the most corrupt anyone could remember. Unfortunately General Chavalit, keeping on many of the ministers from that dubious coalition, has often seemed more interested in asserting his control over all areas of government than in tackling the economy.

Le Monde, page 20

Britain falling out of love with its royals

Alan Travis

BRITISH support for the royal family has slumped below 50 per cent for the first time, according to a Guardian/ICM poll published this week, with a growing minority believing that Britain would be better off without the monarchy.

The poll also shows that in time solid support for the royal family will literally "die out" with the over-65s, the only age group to show a clear majority who believe Britain would be worse off without them.

The spectacular fall in popular support for the royal family — down from 70 per cent three years ago — reveals the damage inflicted on its reputation by the repeated revelations culminating in intense speculation about the new relationship between Diana, Princess of Wales, and Dodi Fayed, son of the Harrods chairman *(story, page 8)*.

But the poll also shows that, despite the warfare between Diana and the Prince of Wales on the world public relations stage, support has grown over the past year for the prince to become king if he marries Camilla Parker Bowles. There is, however, continuing hostility to Prince Charles naming her as queen.

The main findings show much greater uncertainty and scepticism now among the British public about whether the country would be better or worse off without the monarchy than three years ago, when ICM last asked the question.

Solid support for the monarchy held up from 1987 until 1994 with the royal family recording positive ratings above 70 per cent on repeated polls.

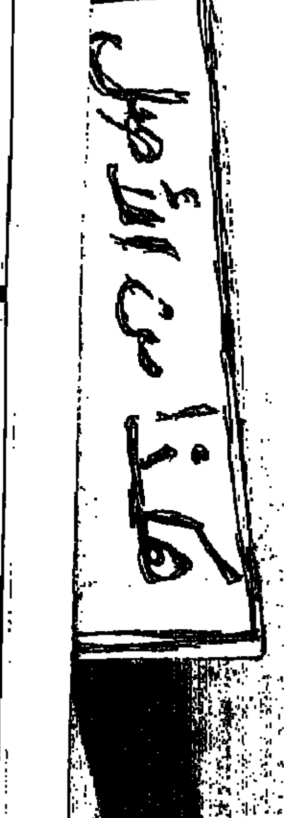
But the latest survey shows that its reputation has suffered a body blow, with the proportion who think Britain would be worse off without them falling to 48 points. Outright hostility to the royal family has grown from 13 per cent a decade ago to 30 per cent now.

The last three years has also seen a jump in the proportion of people who say that they no longer know whether the monarchy is a good thing or not, from five points to 21 points.

A look at the age breakdown also shows that, as time goes by, public attitudes will move towards republicanism, mirroring the findings of recent opinion surveys in Australia which show many young people view the royal family as an irrelevance.

Nearly half those interviewed believed the monarchy would fall within 50 years, although nearly four out of five believe it will survive the next decade.

Austria	A$30	Malta	60c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30



Genuine risks exist in a world of material values

I WAS delighted to see the title of the article by Frank Furedi (Why do we live in terror?, August 3). However, as I read through what is little more than an opinionated, ill-informed diatribe, I felt my blood beginning to boil. I feel that Mr Furedi is looking at society and the world we live in with a very narrow and outdated perspective.

"Young women are particularly prone to panics of the Pill and TSS [toxic shock syndrome] variety" is perhaps the most striking example of his myopic views. The reason why a growing number of women are looking at chlorine-filled tampons with wary eyes is because they have become educated to the very real concerns about placing foreign objects inside themselves. One woman I worked with, who is a vocal activist about the risks of TSS, was left almost dead and permanently deaf due to her body rejecting tampons.

Similarly, the Pill is a far from perfect solution to contraception and when the male Pill is available it will be interesting to see if Mr Furedi is so flippant about the risks.

There is indeed a culture of fear endemic in Britain and throughout the Western world, and it lies in the fruitless search for security and happiness through material acquisition. In a society where we allow ourselves to become passive victims to a gore-mongering media, it is no surprise that security products sell so well.

However, to tie this fear into a very sane and reasonable response by women wanting healthy control over their bodies is a very shallow inquiry. We do not live in terror because we care about our health; we live in terror because we constantly search for happiness in the wrong places.

Charlie Blacklock,
Montreal, Canada

FRANK FUREDI wants to de-traumatise us, and who could wish otherwise? By ridiculing TSS for lack of evidence, he wishes to magic away BSE, nuclear radiation, "potential" environmental disasters such as global warming, and the puncturing of the ozone layer.

It is the psychology of "either/or" that is unfruitful. *Either* all terror is groundless *or* all life is terror. It is encouraging that, in spite of commercial manipulation and jumping on the bandwagon, ordinary people are willing to overturn accepted norms. Is the insertion of a foreign body to stem menstruation the best response? Perhaps sanitary towels were a better compromise between convenience, freedom and nature.

Could there be a growing feeling that modern technology has been too facile when it approached the realm of the organic, the living, and that the "scares" trigger an underlying scepticism when we know that the big disasters are for real, and that politicians as well as business fiddle while Rome burns?

Is it so facile to believe the hormonal interference of the Pill could possibly have detrimental effects? That "today's commonly used brands contain a fraction of the hormones used by women who took the Pill in the seventies" only underlines the point of its dubious former character.

Yes, social and communal solidarity *has* weakened and we can trace it back to the industrial revolution. The solution is hardly "the morality of low expectation" but the emergence of the will to tackle real issues from the grassroots and examine the realities of TSS, etc, and then judge. A true examination of childhood would yield some new answers there to put our fears of the deranged in perspective, but who can pretend they do not exist at all?

A sane evaluation of the need for gadgetry would also ease our security complexes. But so also would good government and a mitigation of poverty and inequality. When we begin to face these realities, *then* we can have some confidence to relax and enjoy ourselves. And surrounded by people who care, the young may find the freedom to be, as well as the ideals worth fighting for, beyond the escapism of drugs and sex, which are allowed to dominate adult society too.

Brian Dawes,
Montrose, Scotland

A LITTLE panic is appropriate and healthy in a crisis. If there really is something to worry about, then Furedi is encouraging complacency.

Peter Adams,
Stroud, Gloucestershire

Shop till you drop? No thanks

I WAS dismayed by Linton Weeks's lauding of the United States' superiority over Europe in its ability to "mine the economic value of time" (Night is right for 24-hour business, August 3). That more Americans are staying awake at night to find leisure exemplifies the failure of the global economy to better the quality of life in the world's most prosperous land. It appears as if the brutally long work regimens and lack of job security of so-called "flexible" employment allows no time for anything else.

I am an American living and working in Europe. I surf the Internet at home and can stroll down to the local 7-11 at any hour to buy my Coke if I so choose. I can also see first hand the effects of "higher European social welfare costs" that keep us "mired in an antiquated system", that "thwart(s) change". People here have what in the US seems to be in increasingly short supply . . . a life, less stress, and more sleep.

Joshua Gross,
Copenhagen, Denmark

AS AN American abroad, I was genuinely saddened by Linton Weeks's article about the burgeoning around-the-clock consumerism in the US. While extolling the virtues of 24-hour shopping convenience in a super-efficient modern economy, the article paints a picture of a country where "everyone's under an enormous amount of strain" leading a "hectic", "stressful existence" in which people "hardly ever sleep". If we insist on continually escalating this frenzy of mindless consumerism, we are going to end up forfeiting our most cherished birthright — individual liberty.

Not the freedom to buy toothpaste at 3am, but the ability to live as free human beings in a sane environment. And for what — to win a destructive race to consume a disproportionate share of the world's resources, and to spawn a few more mega-corporations and billionaires?

When will Americans awake from this nightmare of round-the-clock consumption and empty materialism? Or maybe everyone's just too tired to be aroused after a 60-hour work week and a midnight trip to Wal-Mart?

Paul Capcara,
Savannakhet, Laos

Goodbye to all that

IN ABANDONING Rockall as the westernmost limit of her territory (Britain to cede Atlantic rights, July 3), Britain is finally accepting that it is the victim of a legal principle it was previously able to use to considerable advantage in creating its empire.

As far back as the 16th century, England disputed Spanish claims to North America because Spain had not established "effective occupation" in large parts of the territory. The English colonies that became Canada and the United States were the result. In 19th century Africa, Cecil Rhodes tried to take the copper-rich Katanga on the grounds that Leopold II of the Belgians had not effectively occupied the area he claimed. Rhodes lost.

The concept of effective occupations was used to justify and delimit many instances of imperial expansion. In applying the principle, Europeans assumed that the land they were annexing was *terra nullius* — previously unoccupied. Native Americans, Africans and Australians were not consulted.

In the 1950s and 1970s the International Court of Justice applied the principle of effective occupation in the dispute between France and Britain over the Channel Islets, the Minquiers and Ecrehos. Though impossible for anyone to live on, the hope of finding substantial mineral wealth made them seem worth arguing over.

The closest Britain has ever come to "effectively occupying" Rockall has been to send a civil servant out to land and remain on the islet, sea and tide permitting, for a short period once a year. Greenpeace has done rather more than that and might be said to have the better claim.

Simon Katzenellenbogen,
Department of History,
University of Manchester

Whose hand is on the trigger?

THE press in Canada recently reported two horrifying developments: both the British and Canadian governments are prepared to sell weapons to the Indonesian dictatorship. That is not surprising given Ottawa and London's lust for trade, but what is interesting is the similarity in their justification: both suggest that the weapons would not have been sold if it were likely they would kill Timorese.

But that line of argument is misleading. Even if the weapons aren't killing Timorese directly — and that is debatable — the fact remains that they strengthen the dictatorship's hand. If Canadian armoured vehicles are performing services for the Indonesian army elsewhere, they free up equipment that can, and does, kill people in East Timor.

Amnesty International says about 200,000 Timorese — one-third of the population — have been killed since Indonesia invaded in 1975. The question at its simplest is: do Canada and Britain want to be party to this genocide?

Gideon Forman,
Peacefund Canada, Toronto, Canada

Briefly

"THEY came in and sat down opposite his desk like any other prospective clients". Thus begins the article by Suzanne Goldenberg (July 27). Who are "they", and whose desk is it? Am I reading a news report, or a short story? Please, dear editors, nip this trashy style in the bud. The United States' number-one-or-two news weekly is notorious for making every article a mystery in this way, but the Guardian Weekly should know better.

Lee Hartman,
Bloomington, Indiana, USA

WHEN Derek Malcolm reviewed the New Zealand movie Desperate Remedies a couple of years ago he expressed surprise that anything intelligent could come out of this country. He recently reviewed the NZ movie Broken English (August 3) and said the film was "an important subject matter for a country where inter-racial relationships sometimes cause appalling conflicts". Would it be fair to say that nothing about our inter-racial relationships causes "appalling conflicts" that come within cooee of the murderous inter-racial incidents reported in the UK?

Joe Musaphia,
Wellington, New Zealand

JAMES Woods's appraisal of Jack London is flawed and partial (July 24). What about his socio-political work? Martin Eden, People Of The Abyss and The Iron Heel are remarkable books informed by solid socialist principles and a positive view of human nature. The Iron Heel, for example, is a classic political thriller as well as a clear, concise analysis of the way big business contrives to protect its interests from the threat of workers' movements and democratic forces in general. London should not be underestimated.

Graham Smith,
London

PETRA COVENEY'S article (July 13) states that "it is estimated that 1 million people aged between 17 and 35 take E each weekend". Based upon the number of consumers cited and approximately 1 dose of 100mg, I calculate that more than 5 metric tonnes of E are taken in Britain every year. That is certainly industrial-scale chemistry, but where?

David V Avila,
Ottawa, Canada

YES, Sheila Ross, of course God has a bank account (August 3), and he's not the only one: Jesus saves, Moses invests, but only Buddha pays dividends.

John Chapman,
Sydney, Australia

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US seeks speedy Middle East peace

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

THE United States is poised to launch an ambitious new peace initiative in the Middle East that will abandon the gradual approach of the 1993 Oslo accords and aim at a final settlement as early as next spring, US officials said last weekend.

Dennis Ross, Washington's special envoy, arrived in Israel last weekend to prepare the ground by restoring co-operation between Palestinian and Israeli security forces after the suicide bombing of a Jerusalem market last month in which 13 people were killed.

Mr Ross's mission, if successful, will be followed later this month by a visit by the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, who will present the new initiative.

The US package would involve almost immediate talks on the fundamental points of contention: the presence of Jewish settlements in Arab areas, the return of refugees, the size and nature of any future Palestinian state, and the fate of Jerusalem.

In Oslo, all four issues were put aside for future negotiations aimed at a final settlement scheduled for May 1999. US diplomats now say that deadline should be brought forward by up to a year.

The new proposals represent a loss of confidence in the Oslo strategy of building mutual confidence by small incremental steps. In the wake of the March breakdown in talks caused by a Jewish housing project in Arab East Jerusalem and the market bombing last month, US officials believe a more radical approach is required.

"Oslo is not sacrosanct," a US diplomat said in Jerusalem. "It's a framework, and frameworks change . . . With the gradualist approach, there are so many points along the way where a bomb can undo the whole process."

Mr Ross was facing an uphill struggle in his bid to restore mutual confidence after the bombing. The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, and the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, both offered widely differing interpretations of Mr Ross's mission after separate meetings with him.

Mr Netanyahu's spokesman, David Bar-Illan, said its sole purpose was "to persuade the Palestinian Authority that it must fight terrorism". But Mr Arafat insisted that "talks were not confined to security matters", hinting there would a political trade-off for security co-operation.

Mr Ross did, however, bring Israeli officials together with Mr Arafat for the first time since the Jerusalem bombing.

A Palestine Liberation Organisation official told Reuter that Mr Ross took an Israeli negotiator, Yitzhak Molho, and the Shin Bet secret police chief, Ami Ayalon, with him to a meeting with the Palestinian leader in Ramallah this week. The meeting focused mainly on security issues.

Since the bombing, Israeli troops have sealed off territory under Mr Arafat's control. The Palestinian leader described the retaliation as a "war on the Palestinian people", claiming that Israeli officials knew the bombers came from the Lebanese Islamist organisation, Hizbullah.

Mr Netanyahu said last weekend that evidence pointed to the Palestinian group, Hamas.

● An Israeli soldier was killed and another wounded when Hizbullah guerrillas ambushed a patrol in Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone last weekend. In retaliation, Israeli troops shelled Lebanese-held areas facing Kfar Houneh.

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 16
Le Monde, page 20



Jesse Jackson marches with strikers outside United Parcel Service offices in San Francisco last Sunday. The strike, which began last week, has crippled the US package delivery system PHOTO: LAWAYNE NEWTON

Hun Sen tries to win over king

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

CAMBODIA'S second prime minister, Hun Sen, arrived in Beijing on Monday to seek King Norodom Sihanouk's approval for his appointment of a first prime minister to replace the king's son, who was ousted in a coup last month.

Hun Sen, who was accompanied by the first prime minister-designate, Ung Huot, is hoping that the king will acquiesce in, if not bless, his choice.

Meanwhile the foreign ministers of Asean (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), meeting in Singapore, appeared to edge closer to accepting Hun Sen's political arrangements, which were reinforced by a parliamentary vote last week backing Ung Huot's appointment.

The ailing king, who is being treated in Beijing, promises to be a more difficult proposition. He initially appeared to give way to Hun Sen after his son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, was ousted as first prime minister.

In comments last weekend, however, he described Ung Huot as a "puppet" and said he could not take part in "this new comedy involving the state". A statement released this week will also trouble Hun Sen: in it, the king says he is preparing to abdicate and is only waiting on the second prime minister's approval.

King Sihanouk's popularity and influence in Cambodia make his support of Ung Huot a crucial step in Hun Sen gaining recognition at home and abroad, diplomats say.

Hun Sen fears that if King Sihanouk abdicated it would be the prelude to a bid by him to step into politics.

N Korea 'faces mass hunger'

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

SOME 85 per cent of young children examined in an independent survey of infant malnutrition in North Korea are malnourished, and drought threatens to push the country's 24 million people towards mass starvation, Western charity workers warned this week.

"We are going to see very grim statistics as North Korea moves into winter," said Dave Toycen, head of World Vision Canada and part of a delegation that arrived in Hong Kong on Monday after visiting North Korea. "The crisis is getting ahead of us. It is getting away from us."

With food stocks largely exhausted by two years of floods, mismanagement and the removal of a crutch once provided by the Soviet Union, hope of relief appears to have vanished with the failure of summer rains. The resulting drought threatens to wipe out the autumn harvest and deepen a crisis that aid groups say has reached levels unseen since the famines in Ethiopia and Somalia.

Walt Santatiwat, World Vision's director for Asia, said Pyongyang's restrictions on travel, information and photography masked the severity of the calamity and created what to the outside world was an "invisible famine". Complaining of rigid controls, he said: "You can only see a small tip of the iceberg, but beneath the surface looms a tragedy that could be a hundred times worse."

A medical team from the same charity visited five of North Korea's 12 provincial centres for orphans and other infants in state care. All but 15 per cent of children aged two or under showed some signs of malnutrition. More than half were severely or moderately malnourished.

● Talks aimed at setting an agenda for a peace conference on the divided Korean peninsula adjourned without an agreement. A United States official said the negotiations would resume next month in New York.

Hani's killers want amnesty for crime

Ruaridh Nicoll in Pretoria

SOUTH AFRICA'S Truth and Reconciliation Commission opened one of its toughest hearings this week to decide whether to free the men who murdered the communist leader Chris Hani in 1993, nearly wrecking the transition from apartheid.

Applying for amnesty, Polish immigrant Janusz Walus, the gunman, and rightwing politician Clive Derby-Lewis, the mastermind behind the crime, told the commission they had killed the black military hero to prevent the Communist Party taking power. The commission, set up by President Nelson Mandela to expose apartheid-era crimes and offer forgiveness in return for confession, has the power to grant amnesty if the two can prove they had political motives.

But the application is being fiercely opposed by Hani's widow, Limpho, and the Communist Party, who have hired a leading barrister, George Bizos, to return the two killers to life in prison.

"No amnesty", "Derby-Lewis must serve life", and "You are murderers", read placards held by protesters outside the Pretoria city hall. Many leading political figures, including Winnie Mandela, the Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale, and the telecommunications minister Jay Naidoo, turned up to support Hani's wife and two daughters.

Hani's death on Easter Saturday 1993 hit South Africa like an earthquake during one of the hardest periods of the long negotiations that ended in free elections a year later.

Hani, the former leader in exile of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the African National Congress's armed wing, was an immensely popular figure, eclipsed only by Mr Mandela, whom many believe Hani could have succeeded as president.

Walus, a fierce anti-communist who emigrated to South Africa in 1981, shot Hani four times outside his home in Boksburg, near Johannesburg. A white Afrikaner witness memorised the number of Walus's car and alerted the police, who arrested him 10 minutes later.

The evidence led to Derby-Lewis, a former member of the all-white parliament for the far-right Conservative party. His wife, Gaye, also stood trial but was acquitted, and the court found insufficient evidence of a far-right conspiracy to kill South Africa's black leaders.

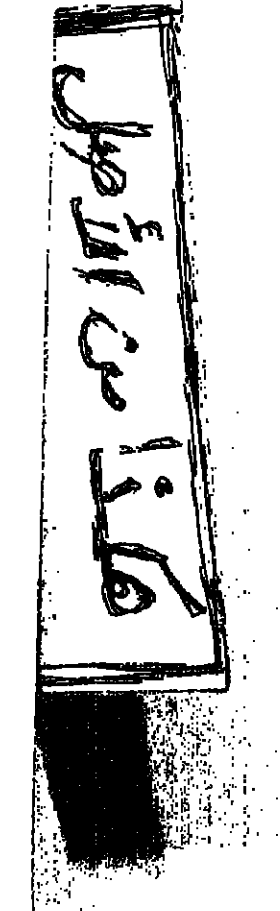
Walus told the hearing that he had experienced communism first-hand in Poland, and had become "seriously" worried when the apartheid government unbanned the Communist Party in 1990. He had vowed "to try and stop the handover to communist rule".

Derby-Lewis was at pains to point out his credentials as a founding member of the far-right Conservative party, in an attempt to bolster his claim that Hani's murder was a political act.

Mr Bizos argues that Hani's murderers were too far out on the fringe to have a political objective. Statements made by the two men to the police after their arrest contradicted their current positions, he told the hearing.

"Racism is just wanton destruction," Mr Bizos said during a recess in the hearings.

The Hani family say that the two men have failed to explain the role of Mrs Derby-Lewis, and that they lied when they said they killed Hani — by then committed to a negotiated peace — because he was seen as a legitimate military target.



Old enemies reach out across divide

Suzanne Goldenberg sees Pakistan and India find common cause

MANZOOR Abdur Rahman's ancient house, or *haveli*, is a secret sanctuary. As the call to prayer from Old Delhi's Jama Masjid mosque, the most majestic in Asia, floats over his courtyard, Mr Rahman, his tranquillity undisturbed, turns the scattered yellow pages of his teenage diaries. His wife instinctively lifts her *dupatta* (scarf) from her shoulders to her head.

Mr Rahman, a university administrator, started the diary in August 1947 because as a teenager he recognised he was living through historic times. His journal begins in Simla, where he was spending the summer with friends, and records his flight to a refugee camp for Muslims and his unwilling journey to Pakistan. He was not to return to his parents in Delhi until February 1948.

"I wrote this diary when I was 16 years old ... But I was not politically aware. Sometimes I do not agree with my views," he says.

Despite the horrors of his journey — the Hindu merchants who refused to sell him milk, the flight from Simla in the dead of night, and the misery of a train journey where children pleaded for water — he clings to one central fact: "I was secular throughout."

Many of his generation were not. They emerged much changed from the experience of partition, and they handed down their fears and suspicions to their children, poisoning the atmosphere between India and Pakistan, two countries that were once part of a whole.

Until the division of British India, during which 1 million people died and as many as 15 million were uprooted from their homes, nobody would have imagined the two dominions as enemies. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan, left most of his belongings at his home in Bombay, convinced he would pop over for regular visits.

It was not to be. India and Pakistan have fought three wars since independence: the 1971 war saw the dismemberment of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh; the other two conflicts were over the disputed territory of Kashmir.

When the horrors of partition began to fade from living memory, the uprising in Kashmir against New Delhi's rule became a symbol for Pakistanis of Hindu oppression of the Muslims who stayed behind. Stoked by Pakistani aid to the rebels, the unrest in Kashmir has featured regularly on government-controlled television in Pakistan since 1990.



Children dressed as Indian leaders ride on a float displaying a banner of prominent freedom fighters in Bombay to mark 50 years of independence PHOTOGRAPH: SEBASTIAN D'SOUZA

And yet despite fiery political rhetoric, an arms race that saw India explode a nuclear device in its western desert in 1974, and levels of defence spending that have helped impoverish both countries, there was beneath the surface of each a deep longing for the other.

In Karachi, street vendors serve up the food of a lost continent — masala dosa, the stuffed rice pancake of the south, albeit a meat-filled variation that would be seen as an abomination by its vegetarian Brahmin inventors. In India, meanwhile, people tune in to Pakistani soap operas.

Otherwise, the two peoples have been kept in mutual ignorance, divided by a rigid visa regime, and a postal service manipulated by censors and spies.

Most who do make the journey return marvelling at the warmth with which they were greeted by ordinary people — despite being trailed by intelligence agents.

In this 50th year of independence, however, there have been positive efforts for a rapprochement. In May, the Indian prime minister, I K Gujral, and the Pakistani prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, emerged wreathed in smiles from the first summit between the two countries in four years.

In June, their diplomats set an ambitious agenda for further talks, agreeing to discuss Kashmir — which Pakistan considers the over-riding issue — and other disputes, which is what India has demanded.

Mr Gujral, who was brought up in the Pakistani city of Lahore, has been sympathetic to the efforts of the fledgling peace movement to foster better relations through cultural and academic exchanges.

But there are more pressing reasons for détente. For if partition divided friends and families, it also cut off trade centres from their economic hinterlands.

At the sole border crossing between Pakistan and India, porters ferry boxes of dried fruit and nuts on their heads. The goods are from Afghanistan; there is practically no legal trade between the two countries, a missed opportunity rued by businessmen on both sides of the border.

Recently, traders in Amritsar, only 30km from the crossing in Punjab, formed an association to press for trade with Pakistan.

"For the first time, there is in Pakistan a social force behind the peace process. Previously only radical leftists or so-called peaceniks were shouting about things. Now the industrialists and the capitalists want peace," Mr Rehman says. "The fact of the matter is Kashmir has gone off the agenda."

But not entirely. When Pakistan's commerce minister last month expounded on the benefits of trade with India, the Urdu-language press reacted with outrage.

In India, too, there have been reversals. The film industry, once the champion of unity between Hindus and Muslims, has lately wavered in its commitment. Border, this year's top-grossing film, glorifies Indian soldiers in a 1971 battle. Mainstream India loved it.

"There is no criticism of the basic jingoism in Border, which is against the policy of the Gujral government for rapprochement with Pakistan," says a film critic, Iqbal Masud.

Subadhra Joshi, a frail woman in her eighties, has spent a lifetime trying to purge those emotions. Her committee to combat communalism has been preaching tolerance for 50 years. As a Gandhian activist, she visited the riot-afflicted areas of Delhi at partition, clinging to the arms of men attacking Muslim neighbours.

"Wherever there is trouble in any part of India, people give us a ring or send us a telegram," she says. "We seek out the good people, not the people who kill. It is these people who keep the minority here — not the police or the military."

One of those unknowns is Ambadas Triwari, a merchant from Kutch, on the western fringes of India, who has been trying to promote exchanges of folk musicians and artists. Last month, after a decade of discreet lobbying, he at last won permission to bring a Pakistani folk troupe to India. "I am hopeful that in the next five years we will come together and the people of our two nations will put pressure on politicians and bureaucrats. This can solve all our economic and social problems created by partition."

Cuba accuse[s] Miami exiles i[n] bomb attack

Ed Vulliamy in Washington

THE exiled Cuban commu[nity] in the United States was la[st] week trying to explain a third bomb attack in Havana in less than a month.

In the Cuban capital, the com[munist] regime laid blame for t[he] bombs on "terrorists within [US] territory". Last week's bomb [ex]ploded in the lobby of the five-star, Spanish-owned Hotel Cohiba, shattering glass but causing no injuries. Two others on July 12, at the Nacional and Capri hotels, caused minor da[m]age and wounded three people.

The Cuban government has been quick to blame exiles in the US, and in particular the right wing based in Miami.

A US state department offi[cial] said that "no evidence" had been offered the US. The depart[]ment has said: "The US quite clearly does not condone this kind of activity in Cuba or any[]where else."

Watching the fallout was El[oy] Gutiérrez Menoyo, who fought with Fidel Castro, was impris[]oned by his regime for 22 years and now leads the swelling m[id]dle-way democratic moveme[nt] Cambio Cubano (Cuban Change), from Miami.

Reviled by both the commu[]nists and the hard right, Mr Gutiérrez Menoyo said: "If it was dynamite, the bombs cou[ld] have come from Cuba. But they are not, and nor could the re[]mote-control detonators — they have to come from outside."

He said the bombs had the "clear intention" of affecting tourism, the country's princip[al] source of revenue, and were a message to the Cuban authori[]ties. "It's a way of saying 'you can stop us'."

He said the bombs would alienate exiled Cubans, adding "I'm confident we're entering [the] last phase of confrontation, be[]fore the dialogue."

Meanwhile the leader of the rightwing paramilitary organisa[]tion Alpha 66, based in Miami, took indirect responsibility for the explosions, saying they were the work of sympathisers in Cu[ba].

"We have always advocated [vi]olence to bring change in Cu[ba]," Andres Nazario Sargen said. "We haven't sent any bombs; what we have sent is words of encouragement."

Protesters shake up French empire

Alex Duval Smith in Paris

FRENCH foreign ministry officials were last week wishing they could redraw the world map, as protesters in French Guiana renewed calls for independence at the same time as a second Indian Ocean island asked to be recolonised.

In Paris — which, since the handover of Hong Kong, administers Europe's largest empire — officials found themselves calling for respect of the "laws of the republic" as police and independence activists clashed in French Guiana. The protesters were angry that an independence leader had been placed in pre-trial detention, accused of assaulting a policeman during riots in April.

But in response to the raising of tricolore flags on the Indian Ocean island of Mohéli — which is part of the Comoros — the foreign ministry repeated its statement that "France respects the territorial integrity of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros".

Last week they issued the same formula after the neighbouring island of Anjouan declared itself "officially re-attached to France", 22 years after joining the republic.

There was, nevertheless, some relief in Paris after the Organisation of African Unity offered to mediate between the government of Comoros and secessionists on Mohéli and Anjouan.

"We rejoice that the OAU has decided to appoint a special envoy to the Comoros . . . in order to help this country find a lasting solution to the crisis born from the situation on the island of Anjouan," a foreign ministry spokesman said.

At odds, both in French Guiana — a South American former prison colony — and in the two Comoros islands, is money.

Guiana, whose 150,000 population makes it France's biggest *département*, benefits from all social advantages that come with being French — free education, subsidised health care and a minimum wage. After 320 years serving France, most latterly as a launch pad for Ariane rockets, it wants out.

State radio said independence demonstrators in Guiana had tried to set fire to the town's central police station and electricity was cut in some areas. There were no immediate reports of injuries as paramilitary riot police used tear gas to disperse several hundred demonstrators.

The people of Mohéli and Anjouan voted for independence from France in 1975 and became part of an Islamic Federal Republic of three islands that has since seen 17 coups. The secessionists claim that the main island, Grande Comore, has been favoured over Mohéli and Anjouan.

The 200,000 Mohéliens and Anjouanais, who barely scrap[e a liv]ing cultivating cloves, vanil[la and] ylang-ylang, have begun le[aving] their coral islands on m[akeshift] rafts in the hope of landing [in neigh]bouring Mayotte, which re[mained] French after 1975.

The secessionist activity i[n the] Comoros comes as France h[as sig]nalled its desire to scale d[own its] post-colonial presence in Afri[ca. The] defence minister, Alain Ri[chard, re]cently said France would [cut its] troops in Africa by at least a [...]

Observers said it demo[nstrates] France's uneasy relations[hip with] its current and former co[lonies.] "The utopia that consists of [...] cutting the umbilical cord ha[s won]dered," wrote Libération.

The Week

AN international conference to analyse information on looted Nazi gold and examine the possibility of reimbursing individuals and countries is to be held in London in December, the UK Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, announced.

SOME 20 Amerindians in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul who were thought to have killed themselves in despair at the encroachment of the modern world may have been murdered for their land, according to a report handed to the president.

TWO policemen and a civilian died in clashes in Kenya during a one-day national strike to press for constitutional reforms before the elections due later this year.

TWO Russian cosmonauts with a cargo of fresh food, a puncture outfit and letters from Earth docked successfully with the troubled Mir space station on the first stage of a repair mission to save the project.

SOUTH Africa's Dutch Reformed Church, long the main moral backer of apartheid, has produced an 82-page apology for its stance during National party rule.

AT least 20 people died and 40 were injured when two buses crashed head on in northern Peru, police said.

TWO German army conscripts shouting Nazi slogans set fire to a hostel for foreigners in Dresden. There were no casualties.

BILL CLINTON became the first US president to kill specific provisions in a piece of legislation, wielding a prerogative sought by occupants of the White House since 1876 to curb wasteful spending.

IRAN'S new president, Mohammed Khatami, has appointed a woman as a vice-president, according to reports. If the appointment is confirmed, Massoumeh Ebtekar will be the first woman to serve in a high-ranking government post since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

THREE IRA prisoners who escaped in the 1988 mass breakout from the Maze prison in Northern Ireland lost the latest round of their fight against extradition from the US.

ECUADOR is promoting a new immigration law for the Galapagos Islands to protect the delicate ecosystem that inspired Darwin's theory of evolution.

THE Australian navy is to post women aboard its submarines for the first time. More than 80 women will begin shore-based training by January.

Finger pointed at Guam crash pilot

Joanna Coles in New York

PILOT error was suggested last week as the cause of the plane crash in Guam which killed 225 people. Twenty-nine people survived. Preliminary evidence from the recovered "black box", which contains the cockpit voice recorder, indicated that there were no mechanical problems and that the pilot was not aware of any difficulties as he approached Guam airport. Korean Air Flight 801 crashed in the jungle several miles short of the runway.

George Black of the United States National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said in Guam that the lack of communication from the pilot in the minutes before the crash showed that he did not suspect any problems.

"If they were having some emergency they would have been having some discussion and there is none of that," he said. "If there was a problem they were not aware of it." He stopped short of confirming media reports which blamed the pilots.

Meanwhile the tension between the US safety board investigating the crash and Korean Air officials became more apparent.

Peter Goelz, an NTSB official, criticised the airline, saying it had had no contingency plans in case of a crash. "They had absolutely no idea how to respond to this tragedy," he said.

He added that there had been confusion at the airline about who was responsible for dealing with the disaster, and his officials had had problems finding out whom they should be talking to.

Contributing to the confusion, the US television network NBC quoted unnamed sources as saying the pilots had picked up the wrong radio signal, mistakenly believing that a signal from a nearby hill belonged to the runway.

A spokesman for Korean Air denied this, saying the airline could not yet rule out a "change in altitude caused by torrential rains". He also mentioned the breakdown of the glide slope, an airport instrument used to guide aircraft during night flights, which was out of service at the time of the accident.

American investigators have said the glide slope was probably irrelevant.

Survivors have given conflicting accounts of the first indications that the plane was in trouble. Some said it crashed without warning, others that there had been a terrible juddering and shaking before the aircraft hit the trees. The fuselage was broken into four sections and bodies were scattered across the mountainous terrain.

Congress cuts off DC power source

WASHINGTON DIARY
Ed Vulliamy

"COME and shake the hand of the man with a plan," boomed the megaphoned voice of Malik Shabas of the Black Law Students Association through the muggy sauna of a Washington morning. "Marion S Barry, the next mayor of Washington DC! This is gonna be the greatest victory since Mohammed Ali beat Sonny Liston! Bring the Prodigal Son back to power!"

It was only 7am, but already hot, and I pointed to a dispensing machine and asked Barry whether he would care for a Coke. He was quick to get in first: "Why thank you kindly. A Coca-Cola would do just fine. Diet."

This vignette dates from 1994, when Barry's name was still synonymous with an epic piece of FBI videotape. The Mayor of Washington had been caught on camera by the agency four years previously, taking two deep draws from a pipeful of crack cocaine in the company of one of his favourite courtesan girlfriends.

After the disgrace came the recovery. To the astonishment of friend and foe alike, Barry bounced back, putting himself forward for re-election as "a second-chance man" who would champion the cause of "a second-chance people in a second-chance city". A breathtaking plan, but it worked. Barry, prison convert to devout Christianity, surrounded by serious young men with Islamicised names, won back the title of Mayor of Washington DC remarkably easily.

He inherited not just the capital of the so-called free world, but also the world's murder capital, with crack cocaine associated with most of the slaughter. A city built on a swamp and based on the principles of urban geography not dissimilar from the racial segregation of South Africa circa 1950.

When Barry emerged from prison wearing a fez and carrying a Bible, he promised "redemption" for what he called the African-Americans of the city. Last week, however, his plan appeared to have been destroyed yet again. On an unseasonally temperate and glorious summer afternoon, President Clinton, surrounded by white faces on the White House lawn, put his signature to a piece of legislation that effectively strips Mayor Barry of most of his powers. Clinton gave effective authority over most of the city's important agencies to a non-elected Financial Control Board headed by an equally non-elected chairman, Andrew Rimmer. White Washington had sacked black Washington from the management of the city.

As everybody knows, and some admit, there are two Washingtons, epitomised by the great white dome of Congress, which rises from among the poor black homesteads of Capitol Street. One Washington is that which Congress champions as the nation's representative body. The other is that of which Barry was champion — albeit in name only — of poor sharecroppers who came up from the Deep South and who now clean and scrub and drive and waitress and drill the roads. One is white, the other is black.

Washington DC and Congress have been snapping at each other for some time. DC, despite its tiny population, launches periodical claims to become the 51st state of the union, while Congress despairs at the disappearing grant fund routine at which DC is so expert.

The bitterness between Barry and Congress was best exemplified by a hushed-up spat in which Barry's local authority refused to pay for the cost of disposing of sewage flushed from within the "Federal Triangle" of government office buildings in the city centre. Federal government waste — of the human variety — was making its way into the river water systems where it had to be treated at local expense, prompting several jokes about "white trash".

You don't have to look far for an explanation for last week's move against Mayor Barry. Under his administration, Washington DC had acquired the dubious distinction of being America's worst-run metropolis.

It has the highest education spending per capita in the United States, but comes bottom of the academic achievement league every year. Per capita, it has more employees than any other US city. One in eight adults living in the city is a public employee, and of those one in eight again is a time-keeper keeping watch on the others.

The services this workforce provides are indubitably the worst in America. The streets are pot-holed; rubbish collection, especially in the poorer areas, is at best erratic, the bureaucracy is stultifying. Recently Barry announced that the city could no longer afford its recycling service for glass and paper — a standard in every other US metropolis.

So dire has the city's byzantine inefficiency become that Barry has seen his solid black vote within the ghetto simply crumble. In the past two weeks the streets of the capital have been full of black youths collecting signatures and wearing T-shirts bearing the words "Mayor Barry must resign". Ironically, it was the mass black revolt against Barry that prompted Congress, at last, to act.

This is all a far cry from Barry's first landslide victory, back in 1978. He had lived in Washington only 10 years before his initial appointment as mayor. Barry is the son of a Mississippi sharecropper raised in Memphis, and activists remember him as being one of the loudest voices on the desegregation marches in Tennessee.



He came to Washington as a chemistry graduate, skilled politician and civil rights advocate. During the years after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Barry's star rose by blending an ingenious mix of sixties black power with black capitalist self-help.

THE BLACK middle class, however, was the one group whose electoral support eluded him when he won his 1978 landslide victory, though he was endorsed, strangely, by the very white Washington Post. He was heralded as "Mayor for Life".

The years that followed were years of boom building downtown, contrasted by depopulation across the rest of the swamp. It was a recipe for corruption and disaster. In 1950, there were 800,000 people in DC; by last year numbers had fallen to 543,000, as the city government became rotten to the core.

The explanation was simple: patronage, favouritism and tin-pot masonry, jobs for the boys. "DC government," fumed the Chief Financial Officer, almost in tears, "has retrenched by focusing on its loyal base: its employees and a few favoured contractors. The public doesn't fit in that picture."

Last week's Congress decree has struck like a thunderbolt. The non-elected board has taken over all the city's main functions: fire and emergency medical services, public works, administration, housing and personnel. The deal will last for at least four years.

The reaction among the DC mafia has been to blend crocodile tears with threats and the language of puerile melodrama. Maybe some of the tears were genuine. After all, the gravy train seems to have reached its terminus.

There was a demonstration at the White House during the signing of the decree. "No democracy, no peace," Barry's gang of supporters shouted. "Democracy has been raped," fumed Barry. "And we intend to do something about the perpetrators."

Then the first meeting of the Financial Control Board last week had to be cancelled and the police called, after it was broken up by placard-waving demonstrators.

The woman leading the disruption was Eleanor Holmes Norton, the city's black non-voting delegate to Congress. Significantly, she had at first welcomed the congressional takeover as "a big win for DC". Now, just a few days later, she was shrieking into a megaphone about "shameful, outrageous, anti-democratic provisions". It can safely be assumed that she had had a word with the boss.

Martin Walker will be back next week

Spies enter dogfight on arms sales to Korea

James Meek

THE prospect of United States troops in South Korea relying on new Russian rockets to defend themselves against old Russian rockets fired from North Korea is growing as the Russian secret services join the struggle to snatch a big missile contract from the US firm Raytheon.

Seoul is due to announce next month which missile it will buy to improve its air defences against the threat of North Korean rocket attack — Raytheon's Patriot, or the Russian S300V. The long-range rockets held by a famine-stricken North, based on the old Russian Scud, can hit the South Korean capital three minutes after launch.

North Korea has also developed an indigenous rocket, the longer-range Rodong.

The Russian manufacturers claim their missile can shoot down enemy rockets travelling twice as fast, twice as far away as the Patriot, and then destroy the pieces the rockets break into as they fall.

The seriousness of the competitive challenge to arms merchants in the US, Britain and France posed by Russia's re-energised weapons exporters was underlined again last week when the Indonesian government, piqued by US criticism of its human rights record, announced it was buying 12 advanced Russian Su-30K fighter aircraft and eight Russian helicopters instead of the US F-16s it had planned to acquire.

Malaysia has already bought Russian fighters. Last month Greece became the first Nato member to shortlist a Russian aircraft as a contender to re-equip its air force.

Winning the $1 billion Korean contract in the face of enormous US pressure to buy American would be a triumph for the Russians and an endorsement of their claims to technical superiority.

Evidence of Russian secret service involvement came in a recent article in the Moscow newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta, which quoted from confidential internal company documents setting out Raytheon's strategy for countering the Russian sales pitch. The cover page of one document reproduced in the paper read: "Company Private — Competition Sensitive — Proprietary Data."

The article claimed Raytheon was offering to sell the Patriot system to South Korea for only 5 per cent of its real value, with the US government making up the difference in exchange for "multi-layered defence" for 37,000 US troops in the peninsula.

It also alleged that Raytheon had promised the South Korean authorities a $65 million commission if the Patriot deal went through.

Asked about the source of this last allegation, the author of the article, the journalist Igor Korotchenko, told the Guardian: "The Russian secret services."

Speaking from the US, Raytheon's spokesman, Bob McWade, said he could not comment on the authenticity of the documents without having seen them and would need time to respond to specific allegations.

"Obviously it would be a serious matter if these were really confidential, private documents," he said. "There will always be people and parties looking to engage in intrigue and looking to discredit the world's only proven tactical missile defence system."

US bases in South Korea have their own Patriot batteries, but these cover only a small part of the country.

So concerned is the US at the possibility of a Russian sale that the defence secretary, William Cohen, put heavy-handed pressure on Seoul to buy Patriots during a visit in April. He drew ridicule by suggesting the Russian missiles might home in on friendly US aircraft and blow them up by mistake.

The effectiveness of Patriots fired against Iraqi Scuds during the Gulf war is fiercely disputed. Raytheon claims "70 per cent success"; Russia says only 35 of 98 Scuds launched by Iraq were destroyed. The US is now trying to improve the Patriot using [illegible] secretly acquired Scuds for target practice.

Russia's strongest card is the cost of its missiles: nothing at all. Moscow is offering to give the S300V to Seoul in exchange for writing off its old debts to South Korea.

Israeli bomb victim disowned in death

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

GRISHA PESAHOVIC was buried as he had lived for two unhappy years in Israel — as an outsider.

He was a shy, 15-year-old Russian immigrant who had been struggling to fit in. Last month he was on his own as usual, wandering through crowds of shoppers in Jerusalem's main Jewish market at the moment two suicide bombers chose to strike.

Grisha was killed because he lived among Jews in the divided city, but in death he was disowned. His corpse was turned away from a Jewish cemetery because Grisha's mother was not a Jew. It was taken to a nearby Greek Orthodox church but priests there would not bury him without Christian prayers.

For four days, Grisha's parents were unable to bury their son. At one moment of desperate grief in the Orthodox graveyard, his father, Yevgeny, cried: "Give me a spade and a plot of land, and let me bury him alone. I don't care where."

The boy was finally put to rest in a remote corner of the Mount of Olives in a small plot tended by devotees of a faith the Pesahovic's had never heard of — the Baha'is. Rick Miller, the sect's representative in Jerusalem, said he found nothing in Baha'i teaching that would prevent Grisha's burial. The creed encourages spiritual unity and the "advancement of civilisation".

This miserable post-script to the Jerusalem market bombing has caused uproar in Israel. The prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, visited Grisha's parents last week to pay his condolences, and Yuli Edelstein, the minister for the absorption of new immigrants, called for a change in the law to allow secular burials.

The Pesahovics were like tens of thousands of new immigrants to Israel who considered themselves Jewish, were discriminated against as Jews in their homelands, and who were granted Israeli citizenship on the grounds of having a Jewish grandparent. But in Israel, they have since found themselves excluded because the rabbinical definition of who is a Jew is far stricter.

"It's OK for them to come to Israel, to go to fight in the army and to die, but it's not okay to bury them," complained Zamira Segev, the head of a secular pressure group, Khemdat.

Grisha had arrived in Israel from Yekaterinburg two years ago with his mother, Olga. His parents were divorced and his father came later. Grisha was plunged into Hebrew school and the process of assimilation, but although he was a good student, he had not mastered Hebrew and did not mix with the native Israelis around him.

When it became clear Grisha could not be buried as a Jew, Israeli civil servants told his parents it was possible to arrange a non-denominational burial in the Greek Orthodox cemetery, but it appears no one told the priests.

"We carried the coffin into the graveyard, and the priest said 'we'll bring it into church', which I thought was odd," recalled Rabbi Wolff. "That's when the whole thing became clear. The parents said 'we're not Christians'. The priest was kind and understanding but said it was a Christian graveyard."

Olga broke down and cried: "He lived as a Jew in the land of Israel . . . I am not ready to let him be buried as a Christian."

There were not enough mourners to carry the coffin back out of the cemetery, so the help of policemen and local taxi drivers was enlisted. Grisha's body was returned to the mortuary refrigerator for the duration of the Sabbath.

When he heard the story, Mr Edelstein, a Russian immigrant himself, rushed to the scene and started calling around on his mobile phone in search of alternatives. "Imagine how a minister of the state of Israel must feel when he has to sit in his car in a parking lot, while the corpse of a terror victim is being held in the hospital, and you have to find someone who'll do you a favour and bury the body," he said.

When Grisha's coffin was finally lowered into the ground in a quiet ceremony, Rabbi Wolff said the prayers and Khanania Shakhor, from the Jewish Burial Society, gave a final oration. Looking into the open grave, Mr Shakhor said: "In the name of all those involved in your funeral, please forgive us."

Military review causes unease

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

TOKYO and Washington face an uphill battle to win domestic and regional support for a planned revision of bilateral security guidelines that would give Japan its most prominent military role since the second world war.

The two countries are engaged in a flurry of diplomatic and political activity to soothe fears that the changes to the guidelines, which are expected to be completed by autumn, might run counter to Japan's pacifist constitution and mark a resurgence of militarism.

President Clinton and the Japanese prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, announced the review of the defence guidelines for security co-operation in April 1996. Although the bilateral security pact forms the cornerstone of Washington's defence policy in Asia, the guidelines, last updated in 1978, only detail contingency measures in the event of a "Soviet attack" on Japan.

An interim report released in June outlined a number of new areas where Tokyo would co-operate in the event of a military crisis in and around Japan. These include the provision of greater logistical support to the United States, such as the use of airports, the supply of fuel and arms, and repairs to aircraft and ships.

Japan would also help to evacuate citizens from overseas, play a bigger role in intelligence-gathering and conduct minesweeping outside its own waters if requested. The final version of the review will not be released until November.

The projected expansion of Japan's military role, albeit a non-aggressive one, alarms defenders of the constitution.

Among the most contentious parts of the interim report is the proposal for Japan to supply arms and ammunition to the US in an emergency. Several commentators have said this would violate article nine of the constitution, which renounces "the threat or use of war to settle international disputes".

The Social Democratic Party (SDP), on whose support Mr Hashimoto depends, has voiced fears. A party spokesman said: "We will not make a decision until the review is completed, but our priority is to defend the constitution, and there are areas in the interim report that are of concern to us."

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) will submit a bill during the next Diet session to make the required legal changes, according to a senior party official, Taku Yamasaki. The aim, he said would be to allow "security emergencies in and around Japan to be treated alike".

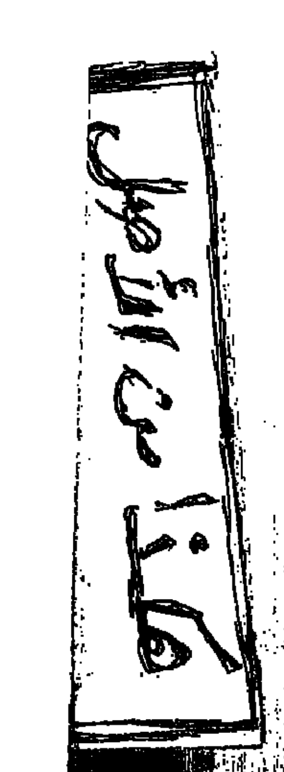
He accepted that the SDP might oppose such a bill, but suggested the government could probably pass the legislation with support from the main conservative opposition party.

Also watching the situation closely are Japan's neighbours, notably South Korea and China. As well as sensitivity toward any sign of renewed Japanese militarism, these two nations fear that the draft revision could apply to their own territorial disputes with Tokyo and other Asian nations.

The US and Japan have sent emissaries to Seoul and Beijing to assure them that the revision is primarily aimed at responding to a crisis triggered by North Korea.

"China remains concerned that the target of the guideline revision may be Taiwan," according to the LDP secretary-general, Koichi Kato, who visited Beijing last month.

In South Korea, anti-Japanese sentiment has flared up again as a result of the territorial dispute over the Takeshima Islands, known as Tokdo in South Korea. South Korean diplomatic sources said Seoul wanted to ensure the guideline revision would not encourage Japanese militarism.



Princess skirts a minefield

John Ezard and Stuart Millar in Sarajevo

DIANA, Princess of Wales, was reintroduced to the minefield of her personal life after leaving Bosnia, a country where charities struggle to raise £700 for a pair of artificial limbs, and returning to a world whose media paid more than £700,000 — plus £300,000 in promotional advertising at the weekend alone — to buy paparazzi shots allegedly showing her canoodling with Dodi Fayed, son of the Harrods owner Mohamed Al Fayed.

This money is enough to buy 1,440 sets of limbs, sufficient numbers to help all the Bosnian children and adults likely, on present trends, to be crippled by their country's 1 million uncleared mines over the next 28 months.

Ken Rutherford, a mine victim and campaigner, dismissed the media frenzy as "the periphery" of her successful visit.

He was with her at a farewell lunch at a restaurant in the hills overlooking Sarajevo. At the lunch, "she never showed any sign of being upset about the publicity over her private life", he said. "She accepted it, she is used to it."

He added gratefully as she left: "It's a shame people are worrying about such trivial matters."

But in London the argument was over the Daily Mirror newspaper's zeal last Saturday in allegedly altering the angle of Mr Fayed's head in one fuzzy picture to suggest that he was kissing the princess.



Minefield victim Mirzeta Gabelic, on crutches, accompanies Diana, Princess of Wales, in Sarajevo PHOTOGRAPH: HIDAJET DELIC

This was to pre-empt its sister paper the Sunday Mirror, which paid £250,000 for first rights to publish 16 of the shots.

In Sarajevo, meeting maimed victims and their families, the princess was exposed to the horrific suffering and devastation endured by the Bosnians.

Followed by a 100-strong media pack, she descended on bewildered people ignorant of the identity of the VIP visitor. "What's all the hassle?" a child asked his friend as the narrow street was brought to a standstill.

"Some Diana is moving in," the friend replied, not recognising her.

Thalidomide effects 'can jump generation barrier'

Peter Hetherington

THE Government this week promised to examine new research into the Thalidomide drug which may suggest the disfiguring effects of the sedative can be inherited.

As an action group claimed that the drug has jumped the generation barrier, the Department of Health said it would look carefully at any new evidence which, it is claimed, shows that Thalidomide affects human DNA.

In 1961, the drug was found to cause birth defects when taken by pregnant women. Children were born without limbs, or with only partial limbs, and many suffered damage to internal organs.

So far 11 of the 380 children born to Thalidomide victims in Britain have been found to have congenital limb defects — at least five times the average rate.

Victims, convinced their defects have been passed to the next generation, this week called for meetings with ministers and the brewing giant Guinness — which bought Distillers, the company that marketed the drug in Britain — to press for more compensation. Distillers paid victims £33 million, or lump sums for individuals of up to £30,000. But with trust funds under pressure, Guinness last year announced it would donate £2.5 million a year for the next 15 years.

The Thalidomide Action Group released the results of the new research at a news conference in Liverpool.

The study was carried out in Australia by William McBride, who first warned the world about Thalidomide 30 years ago, and molecular pathologist Peter Huang. Their research on rats suggests that Thalidomide alters DNA in egg and sperm cells.

If the effects are proved, it would make Thalidomide the first drug to jump the generation barrier. But critics say the second-generation deformities probably have other causes.

They argue that Dr McBride is discredited after falsifying the results of another drug suspected of being dangerous in 1982, as a result of which he was struck off the Australian medical register.

About 2,000 victims are still alive in Germany today and 458 in Britain. But despite its legacy, drug companies are pressing for Thalidomide to be re-licensed. Research has shown it may help to treat a range of diseases, from Aids to arthritis.

Cook's wife blames Tories

MARGARET COOK, wife of the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, has blamed Tory cuts to the National Health Service for the much-publicised breakdown of their marriage, *writes Rebecca Smithers.*

Mrs Cook, a consultant haematologist — a blood specialist — at St John's hospital in Livingston, Lothian, claimed in an interview with the Sunday Times last weekend that her workload and "the demands of her profession" had prevented her from spending more time with her husband in London.

Earlier this month, 51-year-old Mr Cook made a statement announcing the 28-year marriage was over, ahead of newspaper revelations that he was having an adulterous relationship with his 41-year-old political secretary, Gaynor Regan.

Mrs Cook commented: "Probably I should have spent more time in London with my husband. In practice, however, this has hardly been possible over the past five years because of the demands of my profession.

"The vicious financial stringencies imposed on the health service by the last government have prevented rational approaches to staffing, and many consultants, myself included, have carried excessive workloads with little hope of alleviation."

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Carey warns of 'crisis' if Charles opts to remarry

THE ARCHBISHOP of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, never one to be accused of news management, informed a surprised press conference in Australia that if Prince Charles were to remarry it would "create a crisis for the Church".

This was taken in some quarters as a threat to provoke a constitutional impasse if the prince should wed Camilla Parker Bowles and, on becoming king and head of the Established Church, find himself having to defend its teachings, including those that condemn divorce and remarriage.

But the prince has said that he has no intention of remarrying; nor is there any likelihood of his becoming king in the near future. It is also on record that he has no great enthusiasm for becoming "defender of the faith" and that, in a multicultural Britain, he would rather be a "defender of faiths".

Recently, Prince Charles did indeed give a higher profile to his relationship with the divorced Mrs Parker Bowles when he threw a highly publicised birthday party for her. This was widely interpreted as preparing the public for wedding bells and a future Queen Camilla.

The archbishop's staff, however, denied that Dr Carey was reacting to this possibility. He was, they insisted, doing no more than restating the Church's stance on divorce and remarriage in reply to a chance press conference question.

Perhaps he was worrying aloud about a possibility that is as much — if not more — of a problem for the Church than it is for Prince Charles. Although an Anglican bishop was recently remarried to a divorced woman, and remains a bishop, three out of four Anglican priests are opposed to the church-sanctioned remarriage of Prince Charles.

The simplest solution, increasingly touted, is that the Church should organise a divorce of its own, by parting from the State through disestablishment. Perhaps that was the crisis Dr Carey had in mind.

Comment, page 12

GROWING DEMANDS for his resignation forced Lord Simon, appointed in May as Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe, to sell his £2.3 million shareholding in BP, of which he was formerly chairman. For good measure, he also said that charities would share the £300,000 profits he had accrued on the shares since his government appointment on May 7.

In the face of heavy criticism by the Tories and the press, Lord Simon had tried toughing it out, saying he should keep the shares until the end of the year so as to avoid dealing in them while he had inside information on BP's recent performance. He was backed by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who accused Lord Simon's critics of adopting smear tactics.

Lord Simon later admitted that he had perhaps been unwise to think that, because his shareholding was a matter of public record, he was entitled to hang on to it. Such naivety could be explained by his parallel belief that he could hold ministerial office "without entering the world of party politics".

WHERE people live in the 1990s has become a more reliable guide to their chances of dying before they reach retirement age than at any time since the second world war. This was the dismal conclusion reached by Dr Danny Dorling, of Bristol university, in a study of regional differences in mortality rates.

People living in the worst places, such as Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and urban Glamorganshire, are now twice as likely to die before retirement than those who live in the best places, such as the small towns of Kent, Surrey, Middlesex, Hertfordshire and Essex.

The figures mean that Britain is extremely unlikely to reach the target set by the World Health Organisation to reduce health inequalities by 25 per cent by 2000.

THE ARMY moved with alacrity to suspend an officer who, in a Fabian Society pamphlet and an article in the Guardian, accused the armed forces of an "obsession with social class". Major Eric Joyce, aged 36, was accused of breaching Queen's Regulations by not seeking permission for his article, and was also barred from speaking to the press pending the outcome of a disciplinary inquiry.

Commenting on the army's recruitment problems, Major Joyce, himself the product of a Tayside comprehensive school, wrote that the service was still bound by the institutional and cultural norms of the 19th century. It had good jobs to offer capable young people, but they were jobs in a working environment that was steeped in distinctions based on class, gender and race.

FREAKISH weather divided Britain in two last week when the Midlands, London and the Southeast recorded the hottest days of the year while the West Country was hit by torrential downpours and floods. Temperatures in London, Birmingham and Bristol hit 30C on Sunday and reached the highest in many other parts of the country. But parts of Devon and Cornwall experienced flash floods, and 15 people were forced to flee a caravan site at Honiton, Devon, when 8cm of rain fell in 45 minutes.

Austin

THEY'VE SACKED THE LITTLE ... WHO SAID WE'RE ALL SNOBS

MPs urge rethink on drugs

Rebecca Smithers and David Ward

TONY BLAIR was last week under growing pressure from Labour MPs to consider decriminalising drugs to combat crime, in the wake of last week's shooting of Dillon Hull, aged five *(see story, right)*.

Brian Iddon, Labour MP for Bolton South-East — the town where the boy was shot and killed in a suspected drugs-linked attack — called for a royal commission to examine the issue, and said the public was entitled to "an honest and straightforward" debate.

A Labour party spokesman stressed that it remained opposed to legalisation, and that there was no reason to change this long-held position. He conceded that certain "individual MPs", such as the veteran backbencher Paul Flynn — who again called last weekend for the Government to consider decriminalising drugs — held different views.

But, in what could be the first significant rebellion by backbenchers since Mr Blair's election victory, Mr Iddon said a "large group" of new Labour MPs shared his view that the time was right for a review. They were not afraid to try to force the Government to change its position, he said.

"I know this is a very sensitive subject within the party," he said. "But now the election is out of the way there are many new MPs who, like myself, feel the time is right for a rethink."

Labour pledged in its election manifesto to tackle the drugs problem by appointing a United States-style "drugs tsar" to direct the Government's anti-drugs drive, together with provisions in its new Crime and Disorder Bill for mandatory treatment of drug-offending burglars. But last week an American expert warned that the tsar had failed in the US. Professor Arnold Trebach, president of the Washington-based independent Drug Policy Foundation, said: "Our drugs tsar is like British royalty — honoured but with no power."

Last Sunday Mr Iddon told BBC Radio: "I believe very strongly that the public has to have a debate about drugs. In fact, I'd go so far as to say we need a royal commission on drugs. We need to hear the evidence, we need to get into the whole debate about decriminalisation."

The Government had "backed off" tackling the issue of decriminalising drugs, he said. "Clare Short mentioned the word decriminalisation and got into hot water for doing so" he said. "But there are a number of people on the Labour benches now who want an honest open discussion about the drug problem."

The issue is highly sensitive and only the Liberal Democrats have so far called for a royal commission.

Last week Nigel Evans, a shadow cabinet spokesman and co-chairman of the all-party drugs misuse group, said that setting up a royal commission was tantamount to "endorsing" drugs. Last Sunday he wrote to the Prime Minister, urging him to ignore pleas for a change in the Government's policy. "To open the door to the possibility of a lax attitude towards the drugs menace in our society would send the wrong signals to young people," he wrote.

● Almost everyone attending a rave or club dance event has tried illegal drugs, according to a survey by the drugs advice agency Release. The report indicates that drug-taking is an accepted part of dance culture.

Comment, page 12

Five-year-old killed in shooting

Guardian reporters

A BOY aged five was shot dead and his stepfather seriously injured last week when a gunman opened fire in a street in Bolton, near Manchester. The shooting is believed to be drugs-related.

The man leading the hunt for the killer, Detective Superintendent Peter Ellis, said: "It is very, very difficult to describe anybody who is prepared to shoot fatally a five-year-old boy. It is a tragic loss of life. There is a line of inquiry which could suggest that the killing may surround drug activity."

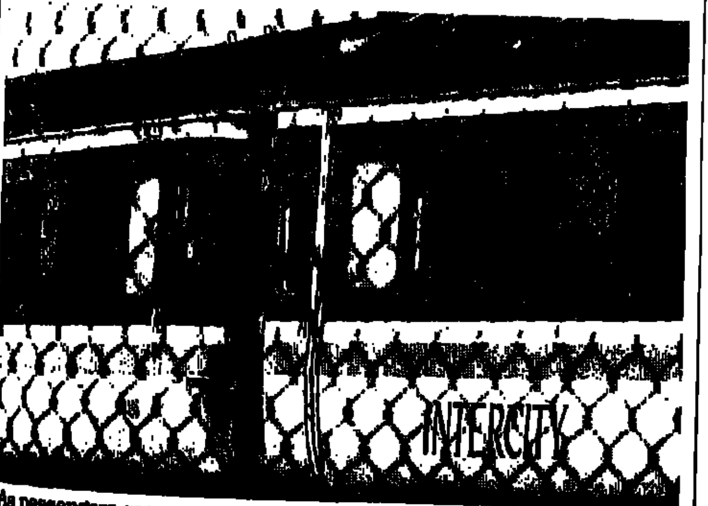
John Bates, aged 28, and his stepson Dillon were attacked by a gunman wearing a motorcycle helmet as they walked near their home in the Deane area of Bolton. The gunman fired three times and fled down an alleyway.

A post-mortem indicated that the child was killed by a single shot. Mr Bates was shot in the stomach. He was discharged from hospital two days later and returned to his home in Bolton with Jane Hull, the child's mother, under police guard. DS Ellis said increased security would surround the house for "as long as necessary". A gunman had fired two bullets into the house as Mr Bates and Dillon watched television on the eve of the fatal shooting.



Dillon Hull: shooting is believed to have been drugs-related

According to the boy's grandfather, Dillon had a younger brother, Codie, who was born last month addicted to heroin. His mother is a registered heroin addict. The baby is still in hospital while doctors try to wean him off the drug. Two years ago, Mr Bates was jailed for 21 months for dealing in heroin.



As passengers squeeze on to crowded trains, more than 700 carriages sit idle at an army base. Operators say they are too expensive to hire

Privatised rail service is 'unreliable and overcrowded'

Keith Harper

FAR too many trains are late, unreliable and overcrowded, and privatisation has not produced the magic wand to cure the industry's ills, the rail passenger watchdog group Opraf concluded last week in its report covering the first year since the industry was removed from the public sector.

David Bertram, chairman of the Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee, said passengers want "consistency and improvement" today, not at some time in the future, and "until we see that, I don't see any move towards a feel-good factor on the railways".

The report says that passengers still have to put up with too many cancellations, service failures and interruptions. It also criticises the rail franchise director, John O'Brien, for failing to ensure that new passenger charters are as good as those by which British Rail had operated.

Mr Bertram said the majority of passengers, mainly commuters, had seen little change. "For many, their service is still lacking in attention to many details such as catering, the right type of rolling stock, or accurate and impartial information."

The report reveals a North-South divide on passengers' complaints to the committee. While the number of complaints overall, including the North, fell for the first time in 15 years, in the Southeast they rose by 49 per cent — and those for security and safety were up by 84 per cent.

The secretary, Mike Patterson, said overcrowding was the main cause of the "huge increase" in complaints from the London area. This was mainly due to the reduction in the length of some commuter trains.

Mr Bertram agreed that complaints from London commuters had "impacted negatively on the general public perception of the railway scene".

Although passenger numbers have increased by 8 per cent, Mr Bertram said they would not see any new trains for at least a year. While the level of expectations had been raised, there was still "a very long way to go" for the 25 train operating companies. Passengers had seen nothing yet.

Sex offenders risk official disclosure

Alan Travis

NEW Home Office guidelines published this week will allow limited official disclosure of the addresses of convicted sex offenders to prevent the "scattergun" naming of paedophiles that has sparked vigilante action in recent months.

The controlled release of details on the National Sex Offenders Register to be set up next month will include convicted rapists as well as those who have finished jail sentences for child sex crimes.

Ministers have made clear they do not want local residents to be automatically given the names and addresses of convicted sex offenders who move into their area after release from jail.

They fear that the introduction of American rules known as Megan's law, under which the release of convicted sex offenders from prison is widely publicised, will trigger vigilante action.

But the home affairs minister, Alun Michael, believes there needs to be a public risk assessment in each case to determine how widely the local community is informed. This will be based on the paedophile's past record and on psychiatric reports.

At present it is left to the discretion of local police what should be done with the information held on the Police National Computer.

The new guidelines are expected to end the recent trend of local newspapers and media "outing" offenders, sometimes with tragic results.

When he first outlined his plans in February, Mr Michael told the Guardian: "We are not talking about the automatic notification of the local community. It must depend upon an assessment of risk and there must be counselling and advice for the offender . . . It must be done sensitively or it just gets out in a scattergun way."

The "graded response" approach means that in some cases schools, local child protection agencies, and some voluntary organisations, may be informed about a convicted sex offender.

Civil liberties groups and probation officers have voiced fears that disclosure will drive convicted paedophiles underground, changing their names to avoid being pinpointed. Some are believed to have already changed their names by deed poll to escape the register.



Big Ben . . . leaning closer to Moscow PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

'Gag' on gene-altered food

Danny Penman

EUROPE'S biotechnology industry has been warned not to discuss the safety of genetically engineered food and the risks it poses to the environment, according to a leaked document seen by the Guardian.

EuropaBio, which represents the interests of the industry, received the advice from Burson Marsteller, leading worldwide crisis management consultants.

Burson Marsteller, which represented Babcock and Wilcox during the Three Mile Island nuclear crisis in the United States in 1979, has been brought in to try to improve the image of the biotechnology industry.

The company also represented Union Carbide after the Bhopal disaster in India, which killed up to 15,000 people, and it helped to manage public relations during the mad cow disease crisis. It has also advised oppressive regimes in Indonesia, Argentina and South Korea.

According to the leaked document, Burson Marsteller has drawn up plans for a campaign "to change perceptions" of genetic engineering, biotechnology, food and environmental safety across Europe.

The company says it cannot hope to win the arguments over the risks posed by genetically modified food, including environmental dangers.

Instead of discussing these issues, Burson Marsteller advises the industry to focus on "symbols, not logic" — symbols that elicit "hope, satisfaction, caring and self-esteem".

It has also drawn up plans to monitor the activities of journalists and publications so that it can target sympathetic outlets.

Peter Linton, the company's spokesman, said the industry had behaved in the past "like an axe murderer with something to hide". The campaign was intended to shed that image.

Environmental groups have dismissed the strategy as "cynical and manipulative".

Tube work tilts Big Ben

Rebecca Smithers

IT IS proving to be the most challenging project in London Underground's history, taxing the brains of the world's most experienced civil engineers and seasoned experts in giant "holes in the ground".

The goal: construction of a brand new Tube station at Westminster to house the capital's £2.6 billion Jubilee Line extension and the foundations of a huge new building for MPs — while keeping busy District and Circle Line tube services running 20 hours a day.

And on top of that, tackling the sensitive environmental and practical problems of digging London's deepest station site alongside one of Britain's most famous listed landmarks, Big Ben.

Underlining the importance of the work is LU's appointment of a special adviser to the project. Professor John Burland, of Imperial College, who is an expert in subsidence, has helped to "correct" the most famous lean of all — on the Tower of Pisa.

Big Ben regularly moves several millimetres every year as a result of natural seasonal movement of its stonework, leaning up to 5mm towards Russia in the summer. But with the Victorian landmark just 16 metres away from the new Tube tunnels under Westminster Bridge, and 24 metres from the station itself, the excavation work has inevitably increased the movement.

"There is nothing to worry about," insists Mike Jenkins, senior supervisory engineer on the project, who says the tower has been periodically stabilised through the injection of concrete through a process called compensation grouting.

The new station is due to open in September next year.

Colleges fear stampede to avoid fees

Donald MacLeod

UNIVERSITIES were this week pressing ministers for further concessions for students caught in the "gap year trap", as confusion deepened over this summer's entry round.

Thousands of applicants who intended to postpone entry until 1998 face £1,000 tuition fees and the potential loss of maintenance grants. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) has warned this could prompt a stampede of up to 90,000 extra students through the clearing system when A level results come out this week. Late applications have already risen by 42 per cent.

A decision by David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, to exempt students from fees if they spend at least three months doing voluntary work with a reputable organisation was meant to calm the situation, but failed to satisfy universities or students.

Details of the scheme are being hastily worked out by his department and were expected to be announced later this week.

The National Union of Students said it would back a legal challenge to allow any student to take up a place next year without being penalised. The Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals admitted it was concerned to avoid the risk of universities being sued if they charged fees to students whom they had already accepted before the Government decided to end free higher education.

John Hall, head of the education law department of Eversheds, a large London solicitors' firm, said imposing fees on students who had already applied would override their rights retrospectively. It would be "unfair, inequitable and incompatible with other legislation dealing with consumer rights".

The popularity of a gap year between school and university has grown. One in 10 students going to Oxbridge plans deferred entry. University admissions tutors and employers are becoming increasingly well disposed towards the idea, providing candidates show they are using the time constructively.

Meanwhile ministers on Tuesday found themselves in the embarrassing position of abandoning Conservative education targets for 2000 as too ambitious.

A report from the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets calls for a review of the targets and makes it clear that Britain is unlikely to reach goals such as 60 per cent of 21-year-olds gaining two A levels or the vocational equivalent. The latest figure had risen only 2 per cent, to 46 per cent. The proportion of 19-year-olds with five GCSEs or equivalent rose 3 per cent, to 70 per cent — still well short of the 85 per cent target.

Baroness Blackstone, the education and employment minister, announced a consultation on the future direction of the targets.

In Brief

AN INQUIRY into the [illegible] by members of the House of Lords to declare all their lobbying interests is expected to be launched next year by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. There is currently a voluntary register of interests, but many peers have refused to declare their company directorships and connections with lobbying companies.

SINN FEIN took another step towards the September 15 multi-party negotiations when the republican party's leader, Gerry Adams, had talks with Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, at Stormont Castle. It was Mr Adams's first face-to-face meeting with a government minister since the new IRA ceasefire was called last month.

THE Social Security Minister, Frank Field, introduced proposals to curb teenage pregnancies, including a plan to [illegible] young single mothers to talk of their experience in schools. Under-age pregnancy rose by 4 per cent in 1994-5.

CHRISTOPHER BRAND, a psychology lecturer at Edinburgh university who defended paedophilia and "scientific racism", was sacked after a university tribunal found him guilty of disgraceful conduct.

POVERTY causes members of some ethnic minority groups to be 50 per cent more likely to suffer ill health than whites, according to a Policy Studies Institute report.

POLICE arrested the [illegible] a 17-year-old girl who died when the jet-ski on which they were riding collided with a power boat on an Oxfordshire lake.

BBC RADIO 1's audience has slipped below 10 million for the first time, reflecting the departure of Breakfast Show host Chris Evans from the corporation's youth-oriented station and relentless competition from commercial broadcasting.

PASSENGERS onboard a Sabre Airways flight to [illegible] at Gatwick airport became "riotous" and were ordered off the aeroplane after their [illegible] flight was rerouted.

ROBBERS stole up to [illegible] lion from a security van [illegible] its guards were ambushed [illegible] they stopped to buy sandwiches.

THE Internet is creating addicts in exactly the same way as drink, tobacco, drugs or gambling do, a psychologist [illegible]

THE drink-drive limit could be cut to the equivalent of just one pint of beer as part of a range of options to reduce deaths, the roads minister, Baroness Hayman [illegible]

Blair juggernaut buffets friends and foes alike

Jonathan Freedland reports on how 'Phoney Tony' set out to prove to his detractors that he is for real as Labour celebrates its first 100 days in office

FAR from being stressed out by the most powerful job in Britain, Tony Blair has the appearance of someone who has caught up with his natural destiny.

It is well known that Mr Blair never harboured any particular ambition to be leader of the Labour party: he only ever had one destination in mind and that was 10 Downing Street. For Mr Blair, becoming prime minister has not been a shock. He was born to it.

Mr Blair dedicated his first 100 days to a simple objective: taking charge. He has attempted it at every level, from the inside of his inner circle to the continent of Europe itself. In three months, he has sought to get a grip not only on government but British politics itself.

The effort began with his most intimate counsel. He moved swiftly on May 2 to construct a kitchen cabinet of the men he trusts most. To his former boss and mentor, Derry Irvine, he gave the ermine robes of the Lord Chancellor — and the access and clout of a Willie Whitelaw. The former Washington-based diplomat Jonathan Powell became chief of staff with a brief to ensure the PM's will is done. Alastair Campbell dug in as press spokesman, with enough muscle to make every other department buckle before No 10. Finally, the self-styled sorcerer of the black arts, Peter Mandelson, was told to "go on being Peter", crafting the message of the new regime.

The significance of these men is that they owe their allegiance not to party, nor even to government, but to Mr Blair himself. Their prime mission over the first 100 days was to bring the Cabinet, dozens of junior ministers, 417 Labour MPs and the entire Whitehall machine under the PM's control. To describe the system they have built as presidential is not quite accurate: the US president is nowhere near as powerful.

And so John Major's brand of collegiate cabinet government vanished in an instant. Sometimes Mr Blair squares his decisions in advance with fellow members of the Big Four — John Prescott, Gordon Brown and Robin Cook — but not always. Dissent around the cabinet table is easily brushed aside. In these 100 days the pattern has been set: it's Blair's government, and he always gets his way.

In this constellation, two other groups are left out. Labour party members amount to little more than a pressure group, admits one Blair aide, while Whitehall mandarins complain they, too, are frequently crushed by the Blair juggernaut.

As with the government machine, so with the nation. Mr Blair has spent his first three months assuring voters that the days of Majorite indecision are over, and that he is in firm charge.

The appearance of activity and energy has been crucial. Witness the photogenic bike race at the Amsterdam summit (which Blair won).

In policy terms, the PM has strived to send the same message, casting his administration as one fairly bubbling over with ideas. Each day has seen a new announcement, with the Blair team showing a special fondness for the cost-free, "emblematic" gesture: a proposed ban on the sale of cigarettes to under-18s or a recommended 20-minute session of bedtime reading to kids.

Critics say such moves do indeed convey the impression of a government that wants to be in charge — of everyone else's lives.

Anxious to cast off the pre-election jibe that New Labour would merely tinker with the status quo, Mr Blair has also used his first 100 days to show he thinks big. The windfall tax, Welfare to Work, university tuition fees, Scottish and Welsh devolution, the mayor for London. This has made tactical sense, with Blair aiming to drive through Labour's toughest proposals while the headwind of May 1 is still in its sails. But it's also been designed to show the Prime Minister getting a grip.

The pace and sheer quantity of legislation expresses another Blair goal. His allies say that, of all the Tory charges against him, the claim that he was Phoney Tony hit hardest. They say Blair was determined to use these first 100 days to prove he is for real. That's why he has not countenanced increased taxes on consumers nor any deviation from Tory notions of restricted public spending: he is bent on proving that when he said New Labour had discarded "the old tax-and-spend" stance, he meant it.

Labour's slogan, displayed again at last week's 100 Days press conference, is Modern, Fair and Strong. This is precisely the stamp Blair has sought to put on his premiership since taking office. "Modern" is taken care of by the chinos-and-denim image. "Fair" has been signalled with small actions: loosening the asylum rules, restoring union rights to GCHQ. But "strong" is the one that matters most.

Mr Blair has moved in these first 100 days to make strong his own position at the heart of British politics. His two enticements to the Liberal Democrats, seats on the Cabinet's constitutional committee and a promise for proportional voting in the 1999 Euro-elections, could lead to complete Blair domination of what he calls the "radical centre". But Blair has been looking even further. He wants to colonise the Tory left and centre as well. In all the rumpus over the trade minister, David Simon, it was easy to bury the lead: that a mega-rich capitalist businessman has actually joined the Labour party.

And he is not the only one. A new establishment is forming, a coalition in which Labour party members and trade unionists are junior partners. That may be hard for them to swallow, but it could leave Blair exactly where he wants to be for the next 100 months, let alone the next 100 days — in charge.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY August 17 1997

Washington needs to be impartial

THE MIDDLE East peace process, if one still exists, is back on the agenda and not before time. On the Israeli side, Binyamin Netanyahu has announced its suspension in terms that imply he does not really care. Yasser Arafat warns of a descent into chaos — the sort of prophecy that can become self-fulfilling. Both sides need a firm reminder that the stalemate cannot continue. The recent European initiative may have played some part in nudging back the attention of a distracted Washington. But can the administration succeed in playing the honest broker when it is so closely identified with one side?

The policy speech on the Middle East last week by the United States secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, was hailed widely in the Israeli press as a "diplomatic triumph" for Mr Netanyahu. On a textual reading this may seem unjustified: she implied criticism of Israeli settlement-building by insisting on the need to avoid "unilateral acts which pre-judge or pre-determine issues reserved for permanent status negotiations". But this followed an uncoded critique of the Palestinian Authority (PA) — in terms Mr Netanyahu might himself have used — for failing to make "an unrelenting effort to detect and deter potential terrorist acts". It may be true that there is "no moral equivalency between suicide bombers and bulldozers". But those Palestinians bulldozed off their land will feel differently. Mr Arafat is being asked to take tougher measures against Hamas in a climate where Israel holds the PA under siege, starves it of funds which it is owed, frustrates implementation of deals on essential infrastructural projects, and continues to pre-empt a final agreement by creating new facts — new settlements — on the map. This is not only unrealistic but, if he complies, bound to weaken his authority further.

In agreeing to resume trilateral security meetings, Mr Arafat has in fact acceded to the US-Israeli demand to put security first. Typically, this concession is scoffed at by Mr Netanyahu, who says it just delivers more "pretty words". He also shrugs off the PA's arrest of 11 Islamic militants, saying that they have only been taken in "to protect [them] from possible Israeli arrest". Mr Netanyahu will go on scoring these petty points unless Dennis Ross, Washington special envoy, can invoke President Clinton's authority to tell him to shut up — or forfeit the next tranche of US aid.

The decision to re-engage in the Middle East is being dissected in the US press with a good deal of circumstantial detail about meetings in the Oval Office over the past six weeks. It involves what is admitted to be a high-risk strategy of going for final-status talks. This itself is a concession to Mr Netanyahu in a context where the provisions of the interim agreement are still incomplete. If there is a slim chance of persuading Mr Arafat and the Palestinian people to take the risk, then the impartiality of the White House must be established above suspicion.

Time for a new prescription

FEW people will have heard of Brian Iddon before last weekend. He was a conscientious councillor for 20 years — and a reader in chemistry at Salford university — before being elected to Parliament in May. He has never sought a media spotlight, but he threw caution to the wind and called for the uncallable: a royal commission into drugs. Mr Iddon wants an open debate that would include examining decriminalisation. Clare Short, a much more senior Labour figure, was disciplined for far less. Yet not even Labour's most oppressive centraliser should want to censure the new MP. Mr Iddon represents Bolton Southeast, where a five-year-old boy, Dillon Hull, was shot dead in an underworld drug shooting last week and whose three-week-old brother is still in hospital with a heroin addiction contracted from his addict mother.

Mr Iddon's call is all the more powerful because he is not a flashy, sound-bite politician. At 57, he has few expectations of reaching a ministerial position. He speaks for the grassroots. Bolton is an ordinary town in Lancashire. No one is pretending it has turned into the Bronx or Moss Side. But Bolton too has its drug dealers.

As the Home Secretary's department has demonstrated, drugs pose serious criminal problems: one out of five people arrested by the police is using heroin. A Health Department survey of 1,100 addicts suggested they committed 70,000 separate crimes — burglary, theft, robbery — to fund their habit in the three months before entering treatment. Jack Straw believes heroin users alone accounted for $2 billion of property crime in 1995. Ministers are responding. The forthcoming Crime and Disorder Bill will give courts new powers to introduce treatment and testing orders for convicted offenders with an addiction. Pilot schemes are being planned where the offenders will be closely monitored through random tests. But several unanswered questions remain: will they work for reluctant offenders or will they only disrupt the rehabilitation of addicts who want to reform? And will there be enough places? There is already an eight-week waiting period for existing treatment programmes.

More controversially, Labour has advertised for a "drugs tsar" to co-ordinate all agencies. Undoubtedly more co-ordination is needed but the fear of addiction specialists is that the Government's rhetoric — exemplified by its choice of an American label for the new official — will result in more emphasis on enforcement rather than treatment. The balance of expenditure is already too skewed towards enforcement. Of course, the supply of hard drugs needs control, but the key to progress remains in reducing demand.

A national debate about drugs is long overdue. A royal commission is the ideal body to conduct such a debate on rational and non-ideological lines. Ministers should seize the opportunity raised by Dillon Hull's murder to set up just such an inquiry. All three main political leaders have been far too wary in the past of being seen to be soft on drugs. It is time they stopped being so pusillanimous. The police have been far more sophisticated in documenting the many ways in which current policies are failing. Unlike the politicians, they have been ready to examine the decriminalisation of soft drugs. The Dutch demonstrated in the 1980s how soft drugs such as cannabis can be decriminalised — through the prosecution process — rather than the law. Unlike Britain, consumption in Holland actually dropped.

Dr Carey should be wary

NOT FOR the first time, the Archbishop of Canterbury has run into trouble for speaking his mind. At a press conference in Sydney, he was asked if he thought Camilla Parker Bowles would make a good queen. Most of those present no doubt expected that Dr Carey would duck the question — the press had been briefed that he wouldn't discuss the subject — but instead he gave a straight answer. While the Prince of Wales's divorce was not an issue, he said, a remarriage would lead to a "crisis" for the Church.

For this he has now been reprimanded by Lord Blake, a constitutional expert so eminent that some believe he is the constitution, on two particular scores. First, that if Dr Carey was going to say it, he ought to have said it at home; and second, that in any case, no fresh statement was needed. "If there had been some reason to believe that the Prince of Wales was contemplating going back on his declaration that he did not intend to remarry, that would be one thing," Lord Blake concluded, "but there is no evidence of that."

The first of these charges — poor choice of location — may be fair, but the second is plainly less so. Almost as soon as the prince's intention not to remarry emerged, unnamed friends and advisers began to water it down.

Dr Carey has good cause to be wary, not just on his own account, but because there is little doubt that much of the Church of England would find it unacceptable that the Church's supreme governor would be a remarried divorcé. It is no doubt true, as Lord Blake also says, that the Church could not stop it happening, and that public opinion (if only after long and assiduous massage) would find it supportable. The Established Church, however would be badly, even perilously divided: fundamentalists might refuse to accept Prince Charles as head of their Church. And the case for disestablishment, now quiescent, would be revived. Those who favour that outcome, as the Guardian does, would find no problem with that. But you can't blame Dr Carey for feeling queasy about it.

Aid money is helping the rape of Guyana

A British project benefits timber pirates rather than poor Indians, writes **Marcus Colchester**

BRITISH AID for Guyana gives priority to the country's poor, right? Wrong. For the past three years, environmentalists have been in an increasingly acrimonious dispute with Britain's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) about its Forestry Support Project, by which $55 million of taxpayers' money is being spent reforming Guyana's chaotic timber industry.

The project, they find, far from respecting the rights of the country's indigenous peoples — Amerindians, who make up the majority in the lushly forested interior — is actually helping the Guyana government hand out logging concessions to foreign companies, some of which have already achieved notoriety in other parts of the world.

The ODA's project got going just as Guyana was caught in a feeding frenzy by logging companies seeking concessions on generous terms. Leading the way was the UK Conservative party's chairman, Lord Beaverbrook, who acquired a bankrupt state logging operation on knock-down terms and passed it on to a Dutch shipping company for a healthy profit.

That concession was, in turn, snapped up by the Prime Group, a Singapore-based consortium, and opened the way to a raft of southeast Asian logging companies, flush with capital from stripping the forests of Borneo and from flotations on the Kuala Lumpur stock exchange.

Egged on by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have been pushing Guyana through "structural adjustment", logging has escalated from a small family business to a billion-dollar industry. As well as the World Bank-inspired fiscal incentives, the foreign companies are equally attracted by the lowest logging royalties in the tropics, non-existent environmental controls and a pliable political élite eager to do business.

Within five years of commencing its political and economic "liberalisation" — after two decades of stagnation under Forbes Burnham's "socialist" dictatorship — logging concessions have spread to cover nearly half the country, which, with a population of only 800,000, is more than twice the size of Portugal.

The country's Forestry Commission only has five trained foresters, none of whom is assessing forest management. No hope of regulating the loggers, then. The country's Amerindians have led the protests against this folly, demanding that their lands should be secured and protected first, before the interior is handed over to outsiders.

Many Guyanese have backed their calls, indignant that their heritage is being sold off for so little national gain. Backed by an international coalition of trades unions, environmentalists and human rights groups, they have called for a moratorium on any further logging handouts. The ODA's project has been designed to counter the runaway logging by building up the capacity of the Forestry Commission and revising the revenue-gathering system.

Under pressure from the World Rainforest Movement, Survival International and Friends of the Earth, an agreement has been reached with the Guyana government that no further logging concessions will be handed out until the Forestry Commission has been strengthened to the ODA's satisfaction.

Measures have, notionally, also been introduced into the project to address the Amerindians' concerns. An ODA-funded study by the University of Guyana, has confirmed that the 60,000 indigenes in the country's interior are desperately poor, have insecure land rights, wholly inadequate health care and have been adversely affected by logging companies moving in on their ancestral forests. However, the foresters running the ODA's project have been at a loss on how to follow up on these findings.

Pressed to give priority to the Amerindians' rights, the ODA has explicitly rejected adopting what it calls a "confrontational approach based on 'land rights'". What this means has only just become clear. Far from acting to secure the Amerindians' welfare by non-confrontational means, the ODA has been drafting laws that will extend the area to be opened to logging and provide loggers a way of dodging the moratorium on concessions by granting them "exploratory leases".

NO MEASURES are contemplated to ensure that the Amerindians' needs are first secured before the loggers get the go ahead. "This is a formula for further conflict," says Jean La Rose of the Amerindian Peoples Association. "The ODA is helping foreign loggers take over our lands, when what we want is to develop our communities based on our own traditions and knowledge of the forests." Taking advantage of the ODA's supine approach, the Guyana government has just signed three further deals with Malaysian companies. First to benefit is one of Malaysia's largest conglomerates, the Berjaya group, which was expelled from the Solomon Islands for trying to bribe a senior government official into granting a concession.

A second deal has been struck with the more shadowy Kwitaro Investments Inc, which says it is owned by the Mafira group of Malaysia. A search of company lists on the Internet reveals that Mafira Techniques Sdn Bhd is an international arms sales operation.

Third to benefit is another Malaysian company, Solid Timbers, been granted access to forests in the very south of the country.

A similar deal with the Canadian company Buchanan Forest Products is also in the pipeline. According to the Canadian Paperworkers Union, the company is notorious in its hometown, Thunder Bay, Ontario, for "its long history of doing all it can to avoid forestry, environmental and labour legislation".

The ODA has now been renamed the Department for International Development, and minister Clare Short says it intends to espouse a "rights-based approach" to development. Whether she can persuade her foresters that Britain's development money should give priority to the rights of Amazonian Indians rather than international timber pirates remains to be seen.

Internet's first offshore bank collapses

Richard Miles

WEALTHY investors across the globe are nursing heavy losses after the collapse of the world's first offshore Internet bank.

The European Union Bank, located in the former British colony of Antigua, has gone into receivership, the Bank of England said last week. Its two Russian-born owners are believed to have fled with depositors' money. EUB, which has share capital of $10 million, is said to have links with Russian mobsters, who allegedly used it to launder money.

The Bank of England had earlier issued a warning to British investors about the dangers of dealing with EUB after a meeting with its former chairman Lord Mancroft, a reformed heroin addict.

British investors with the Caribbean-based bank will receive no compensation, because EUB, as an offshore institution, falls outside the Bank of England's supervisory remit.

A Bank of England official said the Antiguan authorities had put out an international "fraud alert", and added that the collapse of EUB again highlighted the perils of carrying out financial transactions across the Internet.

Since its creation in the mid-1980s, EUB has had a succession of owners. Three years ago, the bank hit on the idea of marketing its services worldwide by establishing a website. Billing itself as the first offshore bank on the Internet at its relaunch in 1994, EUB sought to attract wealthy investors by offering high interest. Its rates on deposits were up to 10 times as much as those at other banks.

EUB also exploited Antigua's tax laws, which guarantee individuals complete financial confidentiality, and have earned the country the reputation as one of the easiest places to launder money. But in February, the Antiguan authorities cracked down on offshore banks and money laundering. They decided to close five of the island's six Russian-owned banks. The EUB came under intense scrutiny.

According to reports in the American press, its two principals, Servey Ushakov and Vitali Papsouev, Russians based in North America, are now being sought over an alleged fraud. The pair are said to have mafia and KGB links.

Antigua is keen to clean up its financial services industry because it hopes to match the success of Bermuda, which derives much of its revenue from foreign investment.

Earlier this year, Antigua sought help from London, inviting the Foreign Office's special adviser on the financial services in the region to examine its banking sector.

But it faces an uphill struggle. British and US officials believe many of Antigua's 57 offshore banks have been used to launder money stolen from former Soviet institutions. Antigua's prime minister, Lester Bird, has since halted registration of new banks and is revising the country's banking laws.

The island is handicapped in its fight against organised crime by a lack of resources. It has a population of 67,000 and its economy is based almost entirely on tourism, which has declined in recent years.

Gates buys a piece of forbidden fruit

Fiercely independent, Apple has been forced to 'deal with the devil'. **Jack Schofield** reports

NOTHING upsets Apple's supporters more than the success of Bill Gates, chief executive of Microsoft, the world's largest computer software supplier, and one of the world's richest men.

It was galling for the thousands of Macintosh computer users, gathered in Boston, Massachusetts, last week for the annual MacWorld exhibition, to find Billionaire Bill beaming down at them from a huge screen. They booed, they hissed. Nothing illustrated Apple's desperate plight more than the fact that the man some regard as the devil incarnate had come to save them.

The scene — which took place in the church-like nave of Boston's stone castle — had eerie echoes of the 1984 commercial used to launch the Apple Macintosh 13 years earlier. That had featured a Big Brother figure ranting away on a similar video display, until an athletic young woman ran in to hurl a sledgehammer through the screen.

Perhaps some of the audience were hoping that life would imitate advertising, but it didn't. Instead, the faithful found themselves being admonished by their hero, Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, who was pacing the stage dressed casually in a dark waistcoat and collarless shirt.

"We have to let go of this notion that for Apple to win Microsoft has to lose," said Jobs. "For Apple to win, Apple has to do a really good job. And if we screw up or we don't do a good job, it's not somebody else's fault. It's our fault. And if we want Microsoft Office on the Mac, we'd better treat the company that puts it out with a little bit of gratitude. We like their software."

Gates had just announced, as part of Microsoft's deal with Apple, that Microsoft Office — by far the most important suite of software for desktop computers — would be available on the Mac for at least the next five years.

Microsoft had also agreed to buy $150 million-worth of new non-voting Apple stock (just under 5 per cent of the company), and to pay Apple an unspecified sum as part of a patent cross-licensing agreement.

In return, Apple would make Microsoft's Internet Explorer the default Web browser in its computers' operating system, and co-operate with Microsoft on various software technologies including Java, the trendy computer language owned by Sun Microsystems of California.

The deal looks good for Microsoft. It can't dump the Mac version of Office, but that's no hardship; Office was popular on the Mac before it even reached the PC, it is already used by about 8 million Mac owners, and the next version is almost finished.

Also, Microsoft's dedicated Macintosh programming team — based in San Francisco, well away from the Windows gurus at Microsoft's headquarters in Seattle — is churning out versions of Internet Explorer, and Apple has already shipped more than one million copies with its latest version of the Mac OS operating system.

In fact, Microsoft hasn't agreed to anything that isn't in its interests. Most noticeably, it has not committed itself to putting Office on Apple's next-generation operating system, code-named Rhapsody, which could compete against Microsoft's fast-growing Windows NT.

However, Apple's *quid pro quo* — support for Internet Explorer and Java — will help Microsoft in the bitter battles it is fighting against Netscape, the market-leader in browsers, and Sun.

> 'We have to let go of this notion that for Apple to win, Microsoft has to lose'
> — Steve Jobs

Microsoft will have to cough up perhaps $250 million over the next three years, but this is small beer for a company with more than $9 billion in the bank. Not having to worry about patent lawsuits from the litigious Apple could be worth that. Microsoft might even make a profit on its Apple shares, which almost doubled in value in the two days after Jobs's announcement.

The whole computer industry would be a happier place without the so-called feud between Apple and Microsoft, though the truth is that the feud has mostly been Apple *against* Microsoft.

After all, Microsoft has always been the Mac's biggest third-party supporter. It developed all its best-selling Office productivity applications — including the Word word processor and Excel spreadsheet — on Apple's machine. Gates even appeared alongside Jobs at Apple sales conferences, encouraging rival software houses to write for the Mac.

This is not to accuse Microsoft of anything but self-interest. It has benefited from being the biggest supplier of Mac software, which brings in revenues of about $300 million to $400 million a year.

Apple aficionados also believe that Microsoft Windows is little more than a clone of the Mac's graphical user interface, and there is some truth in the accusation. However, both companies took the idea from the same source — Xerox's Palo Alto Research Centre in California — and John Sculley, the former Apple chief executive who ousted Jobs in 1985, licensed an early version of the Mac interface to Microsoft. Whatever the morals of the case, Apple lost its seven-year lawsuit against Microsoft, and Xerox lost its lawsuit against Apple. The most important difference between the rival operating systems has nothing to do with technology but with availability. Microsoft licenses its computer code to tens of thousands of manufacturers, whereas, until recently, Apple kept its system under tight control.

Apple's 1984 "Big Brother" advertisement promised users freedom, but not from Apple. Only one company supplied Macs, and it charged a premium price for them. At their peak, Apple's gross profit margins were more than 50 per cent: far higher than in the cut-throat PC clone business.

By contrast, the PC user was free to buy from hundreds of suppliers, including IBM, Compaq and Dell, while also enjoying a far wider range of compatible computers, from handhelds to large, multi-processor network servers.

According to Sculley, Gates phoned him in 1985 and said Apple should license the Mac operating system if it wanted to survive, but this advice was ignored. Larry Tesler — a technology guru hired from Xerox, who left Apple earlier this month — confirms that "Apple considered licensing the Macintosh from the very beginning; it was always on the table. We were afraid that someone might come in and undercut us."

And that is precisely what has happened over the past two years, putting Apple on death row.

During his MacWorld speech, Jobs pointed out that "Apple sales in 1995 were $11.1 billion; in 1996 they were $9.5 billion; this year they'll be $7 billion, plus or minus a little bit. That's the problem, or the symptom, depending on how you look at it."

At the same time, Apple's market share has slipped from a high of about 15 per cent to what Jobs thinks is "around 7 per cent" — some say less — with Windows-based PCs taking almost all the rest.

Some of Apple's decline must be due to people buying PCs running Microsoft Windows 95, but the company admits it has been "hit hard" in some countries by sales of Mac-compatibles from Motorola, Power Computing and Umax.

These companies pay hefty licence fees to Apple for its proprietary technology, but swapping $200 fees for $2,000 computer sales is having a devastating effect on Apple's turnover.

Towards the end of his speech, Jobs came up with "Think differently" as a variation on "Think", the motto of IBM, which is still the world's biggest computer company. "I think you still have to think differently to buy an Apple computer," said Jobs, buttering up the audience he'd so recently shocked. "And I think the people that buy them do think differently. They are the creative spirits in this world."

This is the sort of pseudo-hippy stuff Jobs used to spout 20 years ago, when Apple was just an ordinary garage start-up company (except for the millions of dollars it had raised in venture capital).

The world has changed since then. The agreement with Microsoft perhaps shows that Apple has stopped trying to fight battles it lost in the eighties, but it doesn't address today's real problems, with licensees, let alone provide evidence that it can cope with the future.

In Brief

BRITAIN'S hard-pressed exporters won a welcome respite as sterling fell against the German mark, with international currency speculators piling out of the UK currency after the Bank of England said interest rates were unlikely to be raised further. It followed the fourth hike in interest rates since the election, to 7 per cent.

INVESTORS on the London stock market marked the Labour government's first 100 days in power with a $35 billion buying spree that sent the FTSE 100 index soaring through the 5000 mark for the first time.

VLADIMIR Potanin's Uneximbank-MFK conglomerate gained a controlling share in one of the world's most valuable metals companies, the Arctic Norilsk Nickel combine, in a controversial privatisation auction.

ROYAL Dutch Shell reported lower second-quarter profits of $1.8 billion, reversing the recent trend among oil majors. It blamed lower chemical profits, oil prices and natural gas output for the $60 million profits dip.

THE fallout from Japan's latest financial scandal claimed the scalps of the chairman, president and nine executives of Yamaichi Securities, Japan's fourth largest brokerage.

TWO of Switzerland's biggest financial services companies — Credit Suisse and Winterthur — are to merge to form a $32 billion bancassurance group.

RUPERT Murdoch's book publishers, HarperCollins, will take a $270 million charge, the largest in publishing, to cover costs caused by losses on author advances, inventories of unsold books and job cuts.

THE Prudential — Britain's biggest insurance company — caved in to its critics and promised to compensate 1.5 million customers who were mis-sold pensions, rather than fight each case in the courts.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates August 11	Sterling rates August [illegible]
Australia	2.1553-2.1581	[illegible]
Austria	20.74-20.76	[illegible]
Belgium	60.90-61.00	[illegible]
Canada	2.2155-2.2177	[illegible]
Denmark	11.22-11.23	[illegible]
France	9.93-9.94	[illegible]
Germany	2.9494-2.9510	[illegible]
Hong Kong	12.31-12.32	[illegible]
Ireland	1.1048-1.1071	[illegible]
Italy	2,876-2,889	[illegible]
Japan	183.98-184.21	[illegible]
Netherlands	3.3219-3.3248	[illegible]
New Zealand	2.4760-2.4793	[illegible]
Norway	12.12-12.14	[illegible]
Portugal	298.24-298.58	[illegible]
Spain	248.94-249.16	[illegible]
Sweden	12.97-12.99	[illegible]
Switzerland	2.4200-2.4231	[illegible]
USA	1.5902-1.5912	[illegible]
ECU	1.4976-1.5000	[illegible]

FTSE100 Share Index up 136.2 at 5031.4 [illegible] Index up 166.6 at 4676.6. Gold up $4.00 [illegible]

China Leaders Tolerate Talk of Reform

Steven Mufson in Beijing

JUST two months before a key Communist Party congress, China's cautious president and party chief, Jiang Zemin, appears to be veering toward economic reformers and tolerating the first peeps about political reform since before the 1989 crackdown on protesters here in Tiananmen Square.

In a swipe at the dwindling ranks of Marxist ideologues, the Communist Party mouthpiece, the People's Daily, ran a front-page editorial last week proclaiming that "the words 'market economy' have been writ large on the flag of socialism for the first time."

The newspaper denounced party members who favor a slowdown in market reforms and seemed to indicate that recent outbreaks of labor unrest around the country will not turn back efforts to overhaul state enterprises.

"We ran a planned economy for more than 20 years and created the foundations of industrialization, but it was still an economy of scarcity and an economy of poverty," the paper said. "Ahead is a new world," it added. "There is no way back."

Meanwhile, for the first time since 1989, a handful of intellectuals who are not part of the dissident community have spoken openly about the need for political reform and have advocated free elections and referendums on important national issues.

Last week, a Beijing University economics professor, Shang Dewen, openly proposed a new constitution, nationwide elections for top leadership posts, a free press, a four-year presidency, a more independent judiciary and referendums on key issues.

"China is successful in economic reform," said Shang, 55, who has been a Communist Party member for several decades. "But at a certain stage, it needs the corresponding political reform. The economic rules demand the reform of the political system."

Although friends warned him that speaking out could be dangerous, Shang said the time is ripe to push for changes. A Chinese newspaper refused to carry his views, but they have been broadcast over British Broadcasting Corp. shortwave radio and widely heard here.

These developments are considered momentous in the context of China's incremental style of politics, especially because of the proximity of the 15th Communist Party Congress that probably will take place in mid-September or early October. Party congresses are held only once every five years.

This will be the first one in 20 years without the presence of the late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping and thus will provide a test of Jiang's leadership and the cohesiveness of the Chinese leadership as a whole.

On Monday, China's top leaders had been cloistered for more than a week at the beach resort of Beidaihe, jockeying for party and government posts and hammering out a policy consensus in advance of the party congress.

Although Deputy Premier Zhu Rongji is widely expected to replace Li Peng as premier, debates are continuing over crucial personnel questions such as what to do with the still-powerful Li, whether to expand the all-important seven-man Standing Committee, and who will replace two octogenarian senior military officers, one of whom also sits on the Standing Committee.

While the leaders share similar economic reform views, the outcome of this jockeying will carry important policy implications on issues such as Taiwan, political reform and relations with the United States.

With so much in flux, many people see this as a potential turning point in Chinese politics.

The current trend appears to have started on May 29, when Jiang said in a speech to the school for party leaders in Beijing that China is still in the "primary stage of socialism," a buzz phrase used in the late 1980s to justify a wide range of economic and political reforms.

In using the phrase and abandoning more dogmatic language he used in the aftermath of Deng's death in February, Jiang echoed the man he replaced as party chief, Zhao Ziyang, who was ousted during the student-led demonstrations that rocked the government in 1989. He remains under loose house arrest in Beijing.

Analysts say Jiang's speech showed that he felt safe from threats to his power, especially from the fading "left" wing of the party, made up of Marxist ideologues who worry that economic reform is loosening the party's iron grip.

Richard Baum, a UCLA professor of Chinese politics, said that "using the phrase 'primary stage of socialism' is an act of confidence. No one has used that phrase since [the] Tiananmen" crackdown, he said.

Jiang's speech has not yet been published in its entirety, but excerpts have been published and republished recently in party papers along with exhortations that the party faithful study its contents.

Such signals are providing cautious encouragement to some liberals. Yu Guangyuan, an economist who was expelled from the Communist Party in 1990 and who advised the relatively liberal Communist Party chief Hu Yaobang in the 1980s, has advocated a new constitution and predicted political reforms early in the next century.

Separately, the veteran dissident physicist Xu Liangying predicted significant reforms would take place within two years, and one group of intellectuals has published a book of 27 essays titled "Critical Moment."

A new magazine called Hundred Year Tide, which began publishing last year, has been reassessing orthodox views of Chinese history. In one article, it blamed the Korean War on North Korean aggression instead of U.S. imperialism. Another article hailed former party general secretary Hu for his 1980s drive to rehabilitate people who were branded "rightists" in the 1950s. Hu, a political reformer purged by party conservatives in 1987, has rarely been mentioned in recent years.

Beijing University professor Shang says his proposals might be considered or ignored. Either way, he could find himself in trouble. But he says many party members agree with him.

On Friday he went to a funeral and saw an old friend and fellow party member who had heard Shang's views on shortwave radio. He told Shang that "you have said what we couldn't dare say in the past 20 years."

Australian and Chinese delegates began their first talks on human rights in Beijing this week. The talks could signal a new flexibility on the part of China's leaders PHOTOGRAPH: GREG BAKER

Microsoft to The Rescue

EDITORIAL

APPLE'S COMPUTERS are Catholic, Microsoft's are Protestant, in the formulation of novelist Umberto Eco, a reference to the rigid but clear steps the Macintosh asks of its loyal users, in contrast with the free but chancier approach of computers that work on DOS and the ubiquitous "Windows." It was the hearty corps of Apple devotees who booed last week's announcement by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs that their foundering company would receive a $150 million infusion from its Brobdingnagian competitor Microsoft.

But their wounded pride too shall pass. This latest twist in the shared global adventure known as the computer revolution offers something for those of all faiths. Apple gains some financial stability to coincide with a general housecleaning of its board of directors. And as the Cupertino, California, '70s-era pioneer gains a bit of Microsoft's '80s-era sales know-how, it wins a new chance to preserve and build on the important claims it has made on the education, graphic design and home computer markets.

Microsoft is also a contented party. The business-text success story out of Redmond, Washington — flush with $9 billion in cash for an array of new investments — gains an additional outlet for displaying the Web browser it is marketing in fierce rivalry with Netscape Communications. It wins assurance of a continuing market for the Mac products that Microsoft itself has penetrated to the tune of $300 million yearly.

For the consumer, there is hope that new Apple-Microsoft cooperation will lead to more "interoperability," a movement toward greater standardization within the industry that could reduce user frustration.

Some observers caution, however, that the only thing guaranteed in the computer industry is the constancy of change. As Harris Miller, president of the Information Technology Association of America, ventured after the Apple-Microsoft deal was announced, "We're still at the beginning of a development cycle, not the end."

White Men's Bias Ruling Is 'Far-Reaching'

Brooke A. Masters

FAR MORE employees who think they've been harmed by racist and sexist behavior in the office or factory — even if they were not targets of the bias — would be able to sue companies for creating a hostile work environment under a federal appeals court decision, legal analysts said last week.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond found that seven white male Richmond police officers have standing to sue the city even though their supervisor's biased comments against women and blacks were not aimed at the officers. The officers must now go back to court and try to prove they were harmed by their work environment.

"It's a very far-reaching decision," said Ann Reesman, general counsel of the Equal Employment Advisory Council, an employers group. "It extends the reasons that people can sue you. The message here reconfirms that employers need to be vigilant and responsive to complaints wherever they come from."

Yale University political scientist Rogers Smith said the decision "recognizes a valid and important broader principle: All Americans are generally harmed by racial and sex discrimination."

While the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1972 that whites can claim they were harmed by housing discrimination against blacks because it violates their rights to associate with minorities, last week's decision extends the principle into a new area: hostile environments created by sexual and racial harassment.

The ruling by a three-judge panel of the appeals court officially sets precedent only within its jurisdiction: Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia. Richmond officials said they were considering whether to appeal.

In the case, David W. Childress and six other white policemen alleged in their lawsuit that their immediate supervisor made disparaging remarks to and about female and black officers in 1993 that included references to female anatomy.

When they filed complaints with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, their supervisors retaliated against them with shift changes, job transfers and negative performance evaluations, the suit alleges.

The officers then filed suit under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, saying the supervisor's bias destroyed teamwork in the department and made it less likely that black and female officers would back them up in dangerous situations. But U.S. Senior District Judge Richard L. Williams threw out the men's complaints.

Lawyers who represent employees said the Circuit Court of Appeals decision flows straight from existing precedents. "The whole idea is that you need to make the law as broad as possible so that young people and Anglos will speak out" about age and race discrimination, said Barry Roseman, a Denver lawyer who is vice president of the National Employment Lawyers Association.

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Fujimori Tightens Grip As Rating Falls

Anthony Faiola in Lima

AFTER HIS siege of the Japanese ambassador's home in April to free hostages from the clutches of Tupac Amaru rebels, people in this Andean nation joked that President Alberto Fujimori should be made the undisputed emperor of Peru. But no one in Lima is laughing any longer.

Fujimori, a national hero then, has plunged the country into severe political crisis as a series of major scandals has damaged his popularity and caused observers to question whether his government is becoming a thinly veiled dictatorship.

The mounting allegations against Fujimori's government include domestic espionage, wiretapping, torture, and harassment of opponents and journalists. Fujimori has unceremoniously fired three members of the Constitutional Tribunal who said he could not seek another presidential term in 2000. His government also is taking actions against press freedom, including a move to revoke the citizenship of Baruch Ivcher, an Israeli-born Peruvian who runs a television station critical of Fujimori.

"Peru is no longer a democracy," said former U.N. secretary general Javier Perez de Cuellar, who lost to Fujimori in the 1995 presidential election. "We are now a country headed by an authoritarian regime."

Last week, tensions escalated over allegations that Fujimori had spied on Perez de Cuellar during the 1995 campaign. A local television station produced a five-inch-thick document containing the text of more than 1,000 of Perez de Cuellar's telephone conversations that were supposedly intercepted by government intelligence operatives over the past three years. The calls revealed detailed information about the Perez campaign strategy, including names of campaign leaders who were later allegedly followed, harassed and, in some cases, physically attacked.

The president also is fending off charges that his Japanese parents falsified his birth certificate to make it appear that he was born in Peru — a prerequisite to hold the nation's highest office. In Congress, opposition leaders are calling for official investigations. Some opponents are urging Fujimori to resign if it is found that he was indeed born outside Peru — something Fujimori has denied.

That leading politicians are finding fault with Fujimori is not surprising. But perhaps more telling is the fact that, for the first time during his seven years in office, he is losing the support of the masses. Thousands of Peruvians have staged massive anti-government demonstrations outside the government palace and continue to keep vigil in front of Ivcher's television station, which has taken on a symbolic role in the crisis. Five of Fujimori's leading ministers have stepped down in protest during the past two months. And polls show his approval rating at 26 percent, slightly more than a third of what it was immediately following the raid on the rebel-held Japanese ambassador's residence.

Still, there is no indication that Fujimori is in danger of losing power; on the contrary, the moves that have proven so unpopular also appear to have strengthened his grip on Peru.

"The opposition would like to say we are monsters, but they are grossly exaggerating the situation," said Congressman Carlos Ferrero, a member of Fujimori's party.

The turn of events in Peru is characteristic of Fujimori's improbable odyssey from university intellectual and political acolyte to the most controversial and highest-profile South American politician of the 1990s.

In a poverty-stricken country where the majority are of mixed Indian and European blood, Fujimori, of Japanese descent, became the first political and social outsider to become president. He used his strong grass-roots backing — and close ties to the still-powerful Peruvian army — to wage war against two guerrilla insurgencies, virtually annihilating the violent Shining Path and Tupac Amaru movements. He curtailed hyperinflation and brought unprecedented foreign investment and economic growth.



But his administration has also been fraught with controversy. In 1992, Fujimori committed what opponents called a coup d'etat by dissolving Congress and dramatically increasing executive powers with the help of the military and his own shadowy intelligence machine, headed by an adviser named Vladimiro Montesinos.

Montesinos holds no official title, reports to no one save Fujimori and reportedly earns an annual salary of $600,000. Indeed, some here are now publicly wondering if Montesinos and Joint Chiefs Chairman Nicolas Hermoza are influencing Fujimori's most controversial decisions.

The security services have been at the forefront of the current crisis since April, when it was revealed that Leonor La Rosa, an army undercover agent who reportedly leaked information about an ongoing plan to silence opposition journalists through threats and physical abuse, was taken to a basement of military headquarters and severely tortured.

Ivcher's station led the coverage of La Rosa's accounts and also began reporting on Montesinos' salary and other allegations against the intelligence agency. Ivcher is currently holed up in Miami while he fights the government's charges, which are widely viewed in Peru as untrue.

Fujimori's move against Ivcher prompted a letter from Sen. Jesse Helms, R-North Carolina, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman, R-New York, head of the House Committee on International Relations, saying the move had damaged U.S.-Peruvian relations.

Wife Wins $1 Million Over Affair

Jon Jeter

A NORTH Carolina woman who sued her husband's mistress for breaking up their 19-year marriage was awarded $1 million in damages by a jury.

With their judgment, jurors essentially agreed with 40-year-old Dorothy Hutelmyer, the jilted spouse, who contended that her husband was enticed into an affair by his secretary, Margie Cox. James Hutelmyer, an insurance-company executive, divorced his wife earlier this year and subsequently married Cox, who is now known as Margie Hutelmyer.

"I think that the people in our community are saying with this verdict that families are important," said Dorothy Hutelmyer's attorney, James Walker. "We just recognize down here that we want to preserve the family."

Wayne Abernathy, Margie Hutelmyer's attorney, declined to comment except to say he would appeal the judgment.

Dorothy Hutelmyer's lawsuit is the result of an old, seldom-used provision contained in North Carolina law, which provides a spouse legal recourse if a third party disrupts the marriage's intimacy, most typically through adultery.

In a similar case earlier this year, a jury awarded $86,000 to a woman whose husband left her for another woman. But a $1 million verdict was thought to be unprecedented.

Margie Hutelmyer acknowledged that an affair began with her boss in 1994, Walker said. James Hutelmyer moved out of the family home last year, and filed for divorce, which was finalized in March.

Jurors deliberated for less than three hours before awarding Hutelmyer $500,000 in compensatory damages and another $500,000 in punitive damages.

Complicated Math on the Middle East

COMMENT
Jim Hoagland

PRESIDENT CLINTON works the Middle East as a binary problem of Israelis and Palestinians. But the Middle East is a treacherous mixture of algebra and geometry, not arithmetic: Hidden factors, tenebrous equations and wicked angles thwart the best of intentions.

The August crisis in the region shows the administration falling behind the curve of events after four years of sure-footed if uncommanding performance in the peace process. The Arab-Israeli front is not the Middle East's only front. To forget or ignore the region's murderous nexus is to invite punishment.

Last week the president and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright reaffirmed and intensified the central element of U.S. Middle East policy under Clinton: unflinching support for an Israel that takes risks to secure peace with the Palestinians.

Most of Albright's lucid, forceful speech on the Middle East could have been delivered by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. The main problem with the Albright speech is that it came months late.

Clinton and Albright have not taken on board the new reality that Netanyahu months ago stopped running the kind of risks for peace that the late Yitzhak Rabin was braving when Clinton originated his policy. Nor do they indicate that recent troubling political developments in Syria, Jordan, Iraq and elsewhere have blackened the once promising environment for peace in the Middle East.

Clinton has been sold the view that his foreign policy legacy will be shaped primarily in Europe, through NATO expansion and Bosnia, and in China. But counting on an untended Middle East not to take its own vicious bite out of a presidency is a big and usually unsuccessful gamble. The inordinate time and energy expended on NATO expansion represents an opportunity lost elsewhere.

Albright's reluctance to plunge personally into the Middle East in her first six months in office is not unprecedented or beyond reason. On becoming secretary of state in 1982, George Shultz told The Washington Post he was going to concentrate on big problems like trade with Canada while his capable aides kept the Middle East from taking up all his time.

It was only a matter of weeks before Shultz became the Reagan administration's Middle East desk officer, ruefully proving the axiom that secretaries of state may not be interested in the Middle East, but the Middle East is always interested in secretaries of state.

Albright hoped to avoid Shultz's fate and that of her immediate predecessor, Warren Christopher, who was widely ridiculed for going to Damascus two dozen times. But Christopher's assiduity helped limit the damage Syria inflicted on the peace process. Albright's absence has not been more effective in peacemaking than was Christopher's ubiquity.

In the first months of Clinton's second term, Syria has begun a surprising rapprochement with Iraq's Saddam Hussein, sending trade delegations and opening border posts with its former arch enemy. Jordan's King Hussein is also mending fences with the Arab world's most radical forces after a period of unstinting cooperation with Washington and Jerusalem. American pressures to contain Saddam, Libya's Moammar Gadhafi and Iran are being resisted by usually friendly Arab regimes with new force.

The drift in U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf was underlined by Washington's unfocused response last week to appeals for help from Jalal Talabani, the only Kurdish leader now willing to fight against Saddam. The message Talabani heard in Washington amounted to a request to go away and leave Clinton's Iraqi nonpolicy to slumber in peace. What happens in Baghdad still has enormous implications for what happens in Cairo, or Jerusalem. The Gulf War was fought against Saddam in part to break up the nexus of Arab radicalism that was a major obstacle to peace across the region. That nexus is now reconstituting itself in the absence of clear American leadership toward an alternative for the region.

Albright rightly condemned Yasser Arafat for turning Palestinian security cooperation on and off to blackmail Netanyahu into further movement on peace. But the administration did not seem to understand or react to Arafat's perfidy as the sign of desperation and the new ascendancy of Arab radicalism that it was.

Is it Arafat's nature, or the desperation of his circumstances, that drives him to undermine the peace process? It is both, just as Netanyahu is compelled by temperament and by the Hamas bombs in Jerusalem's market to stop taking risks and crack the whip. Middle Easterners have to play the angles all the time. So does Clinton if he wants to protect his presidential legacy in the region.

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German Greens Move Into Mainstream

William Drozdiak in Frankfurt

WHEN THEY first entered Parliament in 1983, Germany's Greens party members flaunted their image as pacifist tree-huggers. Clad mostly in blue-jeans and sandals, they marched into Bonn's somber legislature waving anti-NATO banners and clutching pine branches damaged by acid rain.

But the pressures of conventional politics took their toll. The Greens soon lost influence as internal power struggles sapped morale and rival parties embraced environmental causes.

When the Cold War ended and Germany became unified, the Greens' failure to build a new agenda led to a humiliating defeat in 1990 in which they lost all their seats in the Bundestag, the lower house of Parliament.

The hiatus in the political wilderness nurtured a healthy pragmatism that revived the party's fortunes. Having regained their place in Parliament in 1994, the Greens are attracting wider support from young professionals and even business by advocating moderate yet inventive programs to prepare Germany for the 21st century.

The latest opinion polls show the Greens may win as much as 15 percent of the vote in general elections scheduled for next year, a result that would make them the third-biggest party and likely kingmaker in German politics. In a fresh sign of respect for the Greens' newfound maturity, a majority of Germans say they no longer have any qualms about role for the Greens in the next government.

"I think Bosnia was the turning point," said Joschka Fischer, a leading Greens member of Parliament who has revamped the party's thinking about NATO, the United States and the use of military force. "Our party was born in the peace movement, but the scenes of genocide in the Balkans changed the views of even the most hardened pacifists."

Under Fischer's prodding, the Greens supported the participation of German soldiers in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. In a dramatic reversal of the days when they led protests against the deployment of U.S. missiles in Europe, Fischer and other Greens leaders now endorse a strong U.S. presence at the heart of an expanding NATO they envision as the foundation of a pan-European security system.

"There is no other choice, because Europe has proved incapable of building its own common defense," Fischer said in an interview. "We need the United States to take the lead in building a NATO-based security alliance that stretches all the way to Vladivostok. Only the Americans can provide the 'big stick' to enforce peace in Europe."

While some Greens still pay lip service to the dissolution of NATO and the abolition of the German army, their views have been overwhelmed by Fischer and other advocates of a new post-Cold War realism stripped of anti-American rhetoric and the utopian ideals of global disarmament.

"The old line about taking the German army out of NATO belongs to our revolutionary past," says Rezzo Schlauch, another Greens member of Parliament who has steered the party toward more pragmatic policies. "We now want to show we can be capable of running a future government and not just get by on the charm of saving the forest and other ecological niceties."

Some Greens policies have become mainstream views in Germany. In the wake of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster and the heavy toll of air pollution, much of the country now embraces Greens demands such as shutting down all nuclear power plants and imposing highway speed limits.

While swift geopolitical changes in the post-Cold War era compelled the Greens to adopt new foreign policies, the impact of the information revolution and the new global marketplace has created a receptive audience for their calls to explore alternative ways to boost Germany's competitiveness and solve its job crisis.

The Greens now promote "eco-capitalist" notions that encourage enterprises to make products such as ozone-friendly refrigerators and unbleached paper. Largely because of Greens' lobbying, German industry has become a leader in environmental technology and controls more than 20 percent of a global market worth more than $3 billion a year.

In Fischer's home state of Hesse, where he served twice as environment minister in coalitions with the Social Democrats, the Greens have racked up an impressive record in regional government. He says the party hopes to make a serious bid for power next year. He is convinced that a majority of voters yearn for profound change after 15 years of the conservative ruling coalition headed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Fischer believes a "red-green" alliance of Social Democrats and Greens could break the impasse and overhaul the tax, welfare and pension systems, which many experts say Europe's biggest economy badly needs.

U.S. Robot Outlances the Opposition

Mary Jordan in Tokyo

LANCELOT WAS a long shot, like an American entry at a bread-baking contest in Paris. The little robot, designed by a team from the University of Maryland, was competing in Japan, the Robot Kingdom — the only foreigner going up against opponents made by robotically inclined Japanese engineering students.

The contest was simple: Each of the robots, had about two minutes to race around an oval track. Guided only by the computerized robotic "brains" their creators had installed on their backs, the robots had to complete the loop as quickly as possible, making sure to touch eight targets along the way with a little lance attached to their front.

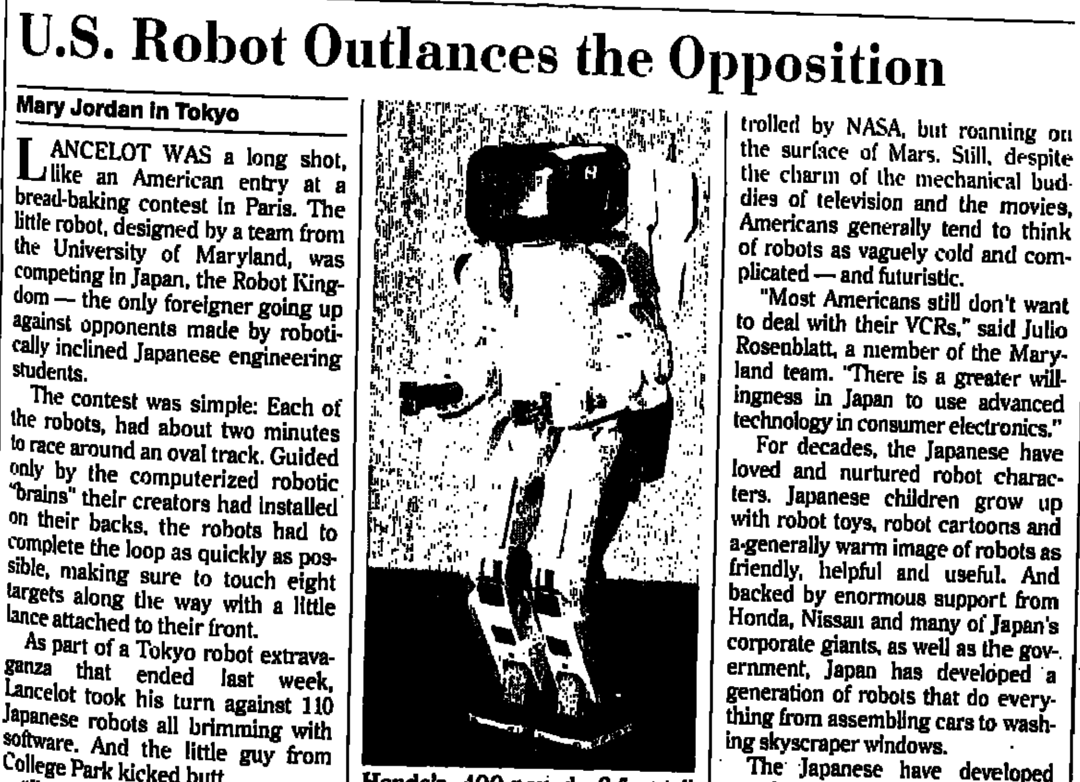
As part of a Tokyo robot extravaganza that ended last week, Lancelot took his turn against 110 Japanese robots all brimming with software. And the little guy from College Park kicked butt.

"I'm shocked we won," said Gregory Walsh, an assistant professor of mechanical engineering, who organized the Maryland team. After the first-place Americans bowed before the judges, they were given prizes that included nearly $2,000 in cash.

Lancelot's victory in Tokyo, in one category at the Japanese International Robot Grand Prix, was particularly gratifying for the Maryland crowd, because when it comes to the mechanics of robots, it's tough to beat the Japanese.

The robot competition and symposium was held in Tokyo to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Japanese Society of Mechanical Engineering.

The event drew some of the world's top minds in robotics and artificial intelligence and it showcased some inventive new robots built by Japanese students. One could play the cello, and another washed hair, using two big mechanical hands to crack an egg onto the customer's hair for greater shine.



Honda's 400-pound, 6-foot-tall robot can walk up stairs

Hundreds of people came out to see the most amazing robot of all: a 400-pound, 6-foot-tall robot that could walk up stairs, almost like a human. This robot, developed by 150 engineers at a Honda laboratory over 10 years, cost close to $80 million in research and development, according to a Honda spokesman.

"Robots were first developed to be used in areas where human labor was difficult — dirty, dangerous or hard work," said Kazuo Hirai, a managing director of Honda's research and development arm. But Hirai said the next generation of robots is going to "coexist with humans," perhaps by aiding nurses in hospitals or acting as nighttime security patrols or carrying baggage for hotel guests.

This summer, robots have been given a big public-relations boost in the United States by the good work of the Pathfinder craft's rover, controlled by NASA, but roaming on the surface of Mars. Still, despite the charm of the mechanical buddies of television and the movies, Americans generally tend to think of robots as vaguely cold and complicated — and futuristic.

"Most Americans still don't want to deal with their VCRs," said Julio Rosenblatt, a member of the Maryland team. "There is a greater willingness in Japan to use advanced technology in consumer electronics."

For decades, the Japanese have loved and nurtured robot characters. Japanese children grow up with robot toys, robot cartoons and a generally warm image of robots as friendly, helpful and useful. And backed by enormous support from Honda, Nissan and many of Japan's corporate giants, as well as the government, Japan has developed a generation of robots that do everything from assembling cars to washing skyscraper windows.

The Japanese have developed amazing robots in recent years, including some that play volleyball and table tennis or cut down trees. A quintet of robot musicians played for the gathered roboticists last week in Tokyo. With a series of arms and wires and clamps and braces, the robots played two violins, a cello and two flutes. The arms moved remarkably like human arms, bowing the string instruments, and it blew into the flutes to produce classical music.

Some scientists argue robotics can waste precious research time and money because so much emphasis is in inventing a machine that moves, rather than one that "thinks."

Marvin Minsky, a pioneer of artificial intelligence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who was invited to the symposium, said building robots was "the thing to do in the '50s." Today, robots can be simulated on computers in no time, so researchers can spend more time exploring the "brain, not the body" of machines, he said.

Swedish Saint and Sinner

Graham McCann

NOTORIOUS
The Life of Ingrid Bergman
By Donald Spoto
HarperCollins. 474pp. $27.50

SOME STARS achieve notoriety, while others, such as Ingrid Bergman, have notoriety thrust upon them. In 1949, when the news that she had "abandoned" her husband and daughter for the Italian director Roberto Rossellini was reported, the American public fell out of love with Ingrid Bergman in the most sudden and dramatic fashion. From being treated like a saint she came to be regarded as a sinner; the young woman from Europe who a few short years before had been hailed as charmingly guileless, "as unspoiled as a fresh Swedish snowfall," was now denounced as "a stench in the nostrils of decent people," attacked by the Roman Catholic Church for having "openly and brazenly flouted the laws of God," and accused on the floor of the Senate of being "an apostle of degradation." It was quite a time. It was quite a story.

Donald Spoto — Bergman's latest and most distinguished biographer — tells it rather well. In Notorious he has, in fact, written two biographies: One concerns the person; the other concerns the persona.

The person was talented, complex and understandably fallible: Orphaned by the age of 13, she sought both love and security, and discovered early on that the capture of one rarely satisfies the craving for the other. She married a man whom she respected, Petter Lindstrom, but had passionate affairs with men whom she loved (such as war photographer Robert Capa, musician Larry Adler and director Victor Fleming). The persona was seductively sweet, simple and saintly: She could play bad women (Clio in Saratoga Trunk), good women (Ilsa in Casablanca) and women who were a little of both (Alicia in Notorious) — it mattered little to her huge and adoring audience, for whom an air of simple goodness forever framed her features like a wimple around a nun. In 1949, however, the gap between the person and the persona was revealed for all to see, and her erstwhile admirers' sense of betrayal was profound.

"Nobody," complained Bergman, "could have lived up to that unreal image people had created of me." But Hollywood, and what must have seemed to Bergman like most of the rest of America, had expected her to do just that, and it took seven long years, and an award-winning performance in Anastasia, before the fallen star was forgiven. "America," notes Spoto, "liked nothing so much as the grand gesture of forgiving a sinner who had, it was felt, done time enough in penitential garb." Her old audience, he adds, "fell in love with her all over again," and her old colleagues, who had abandoned her so callously, now welcomed her back into the fold.

But one wonders to what extent such sentiments were reciprocated. "This is a strange love affair," her character in Notorious says, adding that the strangeness came from "the fact that you don't love me." In 1956, Bergman, having seen herself go in the eyes of the public from saint to sinner and back again in the course of a single decade, must have been tempted to say something very similar.

Donald Spoto recounts the whole sorry saga — and, indeed, the rest of Bergman's unconventional and intriguing life story — with the assiduous attention to detail of the good biographer and the gallant critical passion of the knowledgeable fan. He is good on the doughty spirit that informed the life (the producer David O. Selznick, after the solemn recitation of his new employee's "faults" — eyebrows too thick, nose too long, mouth too full, height too great, name "too German" — was taken aback when she had the temerity to reply that he would have to either accept her as she was or allow her to return to Stockholm). And he is equally good on the underappreciated intelligence that informed the art (in one seduction scene, for example, she exploited the voyeuristic scrutiny of the close-up by dilating her nostrils momentarily to signal the feelings that were stirring within).

He is less illuminating when discussing the nature of the relationship between the life and the art, but, given the contradictory nature of his subject's own attitude to this question, this is hardly surprising. Here, after all, was a woman who appeared mystified by the off-screen aloofness of her on-screen lovers (she complained, for instance, that she "never really knew" Humphrey Bogart, and that she "never got to be a close friend" to Gary Cooper), and yet she was genuinely incredulous when her fans mistook her screen image for her authentic self.

"Ingrid," Alfred Hitchcock once exclaimed, "it's only a movie." It was, and remains, a refreshingly sensible observation, although after reading this resoundingly well-intentioned biography, one wonders if it might have been better addressed to the credulous audience than to the complicated star.

Bergman . . . A strange love affair — PHOTOGRAPH: PETER JOHNS

On the Road and Going Nowhere Fast

Jay A. Fernandez

THE SPEED QUEEN
By Stewart O'Nan
Doubleday. 212pp. $21.95

THIS BOOK is like a joy ride, a spirited yet strangely dispassionate road trip along the contours of one woman's mind, lasting just long enough to feel the exhilaration of the open road, the surprises and freedom of zipping through an unfamiliar landscape, but not long enough to shake an ominous feeling of desperation or to need the rest stops. Which is good, because Marjorie Standiford doesn't let you take one. She doesn't have the time.

Marjorie is talking. At this stage, that's all she can do. She's on Oklahoma's death row, inching toward midnight on the day of her execution and speaking into a tape recorder, explaining how she became the Speed Queen and ended up where she is. She's doing this for two reasons. One, she has to combat the lies put forth in her accomplice and former lover Natalie's bestselling book on how they became the Sonic Killers. And, two, because the rights to her story have been purchased by the only person who could possibly write the book that would gather a large enough audience to set the record straight — the unnamed, but unmistakable, Stephen King (unnamed due to a real-life rights squabble — the novel's original title was Dear Stephen King).

Now while this plot device is unique in conception and provides some humor as Marjorie gives the Master of Horror tips on his writing, it is mostly a distraction. If the reader can ignore this peripheral conceit and simply tune in to Marjorie's voice, he or she will be better for it. Listening to her speak is like scanning the radio horizon, skipping from station to station, picking up pieces of confession, bitterness, memory; her voice will make or break it for the reader.

The Master of Horror has sent her 114 questions, and Marjorie — in her slightly amused, rambling, no-nonsense, girl-next-door lilt — is answering them. Sometimes detached, often hedging on her culpability, she wavers between "Why write it if you're going to get it wrong?" and "You can make up whatever story you want." She flits about, describing her childhood, the death of her pet dog, the regretful loss of her virginity, the numerous jobs and firings for theft, and a typical mother-daughter relationship defined by mutual incomprehension: "Every time I came home I thought things might be different. It only took a few minutes to find out I was wrong." And when she meets Lamont, the handsome bad boy with a "car like an animal," she has found an apt companion for her reckless enthusiasms.

Weaving in and out of this historical traffic is her fascination with motion and the blur of landscape: "I've always moved a little faster than the rest of the world. . . I don't always stop to think, I just want to go." It takes speed to bring her and the lethargic greater world into sync, and even in prison the illusion of movement is a comfort. In her cell she imagines driving: "I open up my atlas and I've got the Roadrunner pegged at 110, headed for the Grand Canyon, the high desert empty on both sides, snow in the ditches. I'm cruising through Albuquerque, the neon of the motels shimmering off the hood. It's like they haven't caught me. No one knows where I am." In her mind she cruises the middle America of drive-in eateries and Tex-Mex food, of Monument Valley and the Cadillac Graveyard, of red dust and endless fences.

The only other thing that can alleviate her perpetual restlessness is drugs — more often than not speed, which Lamont supplies on demand. "I could feel it heating in my veins like neon. The rush came through me like wind from a semi. It was like slam-shifting gears. It was like being the hood ornament on a runaway truck." It is the Great Wide Open of landscape and anonymous freedom, coupled with her growing drug addiction, that fuels her fate and eventually leads to the first of her confinements.

There, Natalie appears like Marjorie's long-lost soul sister. They share the same backgrounds, the same attitude, the same wicked desire for speed. And it's not long before they share the same bed. Marjorie quickly falls prey to Natalie's deceptive games and begins experimenting with her "whole backpack full of toys," but it becomes clear all too soon that Lamont also has a hand in Natalie's grab-bag. Things start to go south, or, rather, west, after their collective drug-dealing and tenuous money-making schemes take an ugly turn, causing Marjorie to comment, "Nothing's heavier than money."

ON THE run, it begins to dawn on Marjorie that her total embrace of that American ideal of unencumbered freedom and surrounding beauty can be a dangerous mirage. "The night hypnotizes you, the lines holding the car on the road, the reflectors tricking your eyes. Cattle trucks passed the other way, deadheading, lit up like UFOs . . . Around three in the morning, in the middle of the desert, a railroad gate swung down in front of us and a Sante Fe engine blared past, hauling a long line of gondola cars. An hour later I had to wait for it again. It was like we were going nowhere." It's as if there is no real escape from that corrupted modern nightmare of Oprah overload and fast-food fanaticism, pop-culture paranoia and small-town suffocation. All the while, the growing tension created by Marjorie's distrust and jealousy of Natalie and Lamont's intimacy is as constant as the dead-end road their lives are barreling down. To be sure, it will end in a seemingly unavoidable explosion of violence.

Named one of America's Best Young Novelists by Granta in 1996 on the numerous strengths of his two previous novels, Snow Angels and, most notably, The Names Of The Dead, O'Nan has switched gears with his current work. While Names is dense, lyrical and brooding, The Speed Queen is literature on fast forward: truncated, fragmented, edgy, reveling in its maximum momentum. Rumor has it that he wrote it while living along Route 66 and, indeed, it reads like a feverish tour of the Midwestern psyche on, well, speed.

Unfortunately, O'Nan has taken Marjorie's "Just tell a good story" to heart and left it at that — its depth negligible compared with the searing intensity of The Names Of The Dead. Even if The Speed Queen represents O'Nan in good form — the breathless storytelling, laser-like detail, trenchant commentary — in the end, though Marjorie is not forgettable, the novel itself probably is. Not to worry. The great thing about O'Nan is that even when he's on cruise control, even when his considerable writing talent outpaces the ambition and scope of his story, he remains at the front of the contemporary literary pack. And you know, with that creative engine humming under the hood, that at any moment he could put his foot to the floor.

Bolivia's former dictator back at the helm

Alain Abellard in La Paz

AT HIS sixth attempt and at the age of 71, General Hugo Banzer, Bolivia's former dictator, was elected president on August 5 by the country's bicameral congress, which came to power at last June's general election.

The story of Banzer has as much to do with redemption as with his determination over the past 19 years to prove that he believes in democracy. After organising elections and stepping down in 1978, he founded his own party, Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN), a year later. Since then, Banzer has worked tirelessly to return to power through the ballot box.

His supporters think the expression "de facto leader" is a more accurate reflection of his status during the 1971-78 period — when trade unions and opposition parties were banned — than the term "dictator", which does not take into account the full facts of Bolivia's situation at the time and gives a distorted picture of a man they describe as "popular and progressive".

"I know I've got an image problem, especially in Europe," says Banzer, who has suffered not only from having a German-sounding name, but from having belonged to the very select club of dictators who ran a number of South American countries two decades ago, such as Uruguay's Juan Maria Bordaberry, Paraguay's Alfredo Stroessner, Argentina's Rafael Videla, Brazil's Ernesto Geisel and Chile's Augusto Pinochet.

The advent in 1971 of a dictatorship with Banzer in charge was more the result of a civilian government abdicating its responsibilities than anything else. According to José Gramunt, an observer of Bolivian politics, the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the Socialist Phalange (FSB), the two strongest parties at the time, called upon Bolivia's "most prestigious army officer", who was then posted abroad, to return home and help them deal with problems they had been unable to solve.

General Banzer's supporters outside congress in La Paz last week — PHOTO: SANDRA BOULANGER

Gramunt says: "Those two parties engineered an alliance between the civilian authorities and the army in the hope of cobbling together an effective government, and the general emerged as the sole survivor of that morganatic marriage.

"Bolivia had been thrown into a state of total chaos by 1971 . . . It was teetering on the brink of collapse, and at that time the left thought its only chance of bringing about change was through radical violence."

That is a view shared by the Bolivian historian Carlos D Mesa Gisbert: "By 1971 the country had reached a degree of polarisation that divided society irreconcilably down the middle."

Oscar Eid Franco, general secretary and co-founder of the Revolutionary Movement of the Left (MIR), the country's second-largest political force and Banzer's main ally, denounces the "political conspiracy" that resulted in his being accused of links with drug traffickers and held in the very same prison in La Paz city centre where Banzer sent him in 1973, before deporting him to France along with many other opposition leaders.

While recalling those "tough years", Eid has no difficulty in declaring himself to be a wholehearted supporter of the general. MIR, he remembers, grew out of a determination to resist the dictatorship of 1971, and it became "a democratic alternative only when Banzer, who had contacted us, agreed to play ball and organise free elections in 1978". Eid rejects the idea that the Bolivians have elected Banzer as president "because of their profound amnesia".

"I have absolutely no regrets about my decision 26 years ago," Banzer now says. "If the circumstances in my country were the same today, I would do likewise. I now have the same weight of responsibility as I had then. Irrespective of what people may say about me, I'm above all a mediator, and it's in that spirit that I'm going to govern the country."

He says he will contact the *cocaleros* (coca growers) and examine with them how best to put an end to the violent clashes that have been taking place in the Chiapare region.

While paying tribute to Banzer, who "has changed since the period of the dictatorship", Juan Carlos Duran, his unsuccessful MNR rival at the presidential elections, denounces the populist way the ADN has exploited the issue of poverty. He argues that the "coalition that has swept him to power is an ill-assorted group that ranges from the left to the far right", and that over a period of time it will not survive the realities of running the country and dealing with the challenges facing it.

During his campaign, whose slogan was "Bread, a roof and a job", Banzer committed himself more to "humanising the effects of the free-market reforms implemented in this country over the past four years" than to suspending them. However, the adjustment measures he advocates do not appear to call into question the changes effected since 1993.

That is the opinion of Simon Reyes, head of the Bolivian Communist party and a former leader of the COB trade union federation. "My country is a factory for making poor people," he says, "and the new coalition led by Banzer won't change that fact of life. With people like him, Bolivia will always be a realm of poverty."

The strength of the coalition formed by Banzer is not seen as a problem by Remedios Loza, the woman who successfully stood as a candidate for the Amerindian populist party, Condepa. She will be joining the government for the first time.

Loza believes that earlier governments thought only of their own interests, and expects her alliance with the ADN to have the effect of making Bolivia's present economic model more flexible. She believes Banzer to be sincere, "because he has given proof of his belief in democracy and is sincerely seeking to create the broadest-based unity in the country". She says her party will support him as long as he keeps his promises. "We have five years to see how things go," she says.

(August 3)

Turks look to new solutions for Kurd crisis

Nicole Pope in Diyarbakir

THE streets of Diyarbakir, the Kurdish "capital" of southeast Anatolia, teem with grubby, ragged children who persistently tug at your sleeve to get you to buy a packet of chewing-gum or weigh yourself on the bathroom scales they carry.

They, like the families whose meagre income they supplement, are victims of the 13-year conflict between Turkish government forces and the rebels of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has killed more than 23,000 people and forcibly displaced many others, estimated to be between 350,000 and 2 million. Kurds fleeing the fighting or forced by government troops to leave their homes have poured into Diyarbakir, whose population has quadrupled to 1.5 million.

This rural exodus has had a considerable impact on local farming. Stockbreeding has dwindled to the point where Turkey is forced to import meat, and market garden produce has become more expensive.

Although the war goes on, it no longer dominates life here as it did in the early nineties. The urgency of the need to deal with the problem of poverty, so as to ensure that today's starving children do not become tomorrow's revolutionaries, is now exercising people's minds more than it did. At the beginning of 1997, Turkish public opinion was shocked by television pictures of Kurdish refugees fighting desperately over food that was being handed out.

Lack of educational facilities for the Kurds is a chronic problem that is ticking away like a time bomb. The war, the murder of many teachers by the PKK and the rural exodus has caused some 3,000 schools to be closed.

The state cannot be held solely responsible for this state of affairs: Kurds continue to have too many children (often 10 per family), and many farmers who used to survive by getting their children to work the fields with them have not really understood the need for education.

A United Nations-sponsored conference on the fight against poverty, organised recently in Diyarbakir, marked a first step in a new direction. Other regions of Turkey are beginning to realise that force alone will not solve the "Kurdish" problem.

In early May the military called in representatives of the private sector for a briefing. Their message was that "the armed forces have done their job, and it is now the turn of the non-armed forces [government and business] to do theirs".

During the conference, Ishak Alaton, head of Alarko, one of Turkey's biggest holding companies, argued in favour of "a united Turkey, not a two-tier Turkey". But if people like him and the government want to end a conflict that is draining the country and gain the trust of the Kurds, there will have to be a material improvement in their situation.

In and around Istanbul, where only 1.4 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, the average annual income is $7,349 per head. The figure for some parts of southeast Anatolia is only $660 a year. Local leaders believe that more than 80 per cent of refugees survive on less than $1 a day.

"Successive governments have unveiled nine packages of measures to develop the region, thus giving the impression that millions have been poured into southeast Anatolia," says Mehmet Sirin Yigit, head of Diyarbakir's chamber of commerce and industry. "In fact nothing has been done. It was all lies."

The celebrated "southeast Anatolia project" is regularly presented by the government as proof of its determination to get this region out of the doldrums. With its 22 dams and 19 hydro-electric power stations, it will irrigate vast plains and create many jobs.

So far $12 billion has been spent on the project. But Ahmet Ozer, head of the Union of Municipalities in the region, says the energy created by the dam is sent west to meet the needs of industry in big cities.

While the energy tranche of the project is now 90 per cent complete, only 7 per cent of the irrigation programme, which will have a real impact on the local economy, has been finished.

Although inaccessible, the region has a great economic potential. It forms part of the celebrated "fertile crescent", and for decades supplied the rest of Turkey and neighbouring countries with the farm produce and meat they needed. It has plenty of water, and meets one third of Turkey's oil needs.

Yet for too long the region was neglected and allowed to decline. In 1923, shortly after the founding of the republic, Diyarbakir province was economically the second-strongest of Turkey's 80 provinces. By the mid-sixties, it had slumped to 26th position, and it now stands 62nd in the rankings.

A few companies have tried to ignore the war and have invested timidly. But the region will not really take off unless it gets the backing of the government. And the government seems to be dragging its feet.

Huseyin Bora, provincial secretary of the pro-Kurdish Hadep party, said recently that he thought the army was clearly seeking a political solution, and that Ankara's policies were becoming more flexible.

The new approach has not, however, been adopted at every echelon of government: a few days after Bora's optimistic remarks, a young man who had replaced a Turkish flag with a portrait of the PKK's leader at the 1996 party conference was sent to prison for 22 years by a state security court. Thirty-one party leaders attending the conference also got jail sentences of up to six years.

Mesut Yilmaz's new government says it intends to redevelop farming in the region. But if the situation is to improve significantly the authorities will have to allow those refugees who want to return home to do so and provide them with enough money to rebuild their lives and their war-torn villages, more than 2,000 of which have been destroyed.

(August 8)



Thailand crisis comes close to meltdown

Jean-Claude Pomonti
in Bangkok

WHEN the money was easy and business was thriving, Thailand got into the habit of living beyond its means and accepted a certain degree of ethical laxity in politics. Those times are now over.

The ruling coalition brought to power by the November 1996 election and headed by General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh was slow to realise the scale of the country's economic and financial crisis. The belated decision to float the baht at the beginning of July was taken precipitately, and meant that Thailand had no choice but to turn to the International Monetary Fund for help.

Another of the country's problems is the over-cosy relationship between politics and business. Ever since the military was forced to hand over power in 1992, business patrons have funded election campaigns and political parties.

In such an environment, complicity has prevented essential reforms from going through. The government has kept several financial establishments on a life-support machine, because to allow them to go to the wall would be tantamount to refusing to lend a helping hand to a partner or debtor.

The bitter pill proposed by the IMF — the liquidation of a large number of insolvent financial establishments — will probably cause cracks to appear in the edifice of political solidarity.

That is why the prime minister, who heads the largest parliamentary party, was careful to put the right people in key economic posts before the crunch came. Several senior civil servants, including the governor of the central bank, resigned or were eased out of their jobs.

Another of Thailand's handicaps is the wide political spectrum over which votes are spread. This means that in order to have a majority in parliament any government needs to form a coalition of several parties. Six parties are represented in the current government. That reduces its room for manoeuvre.

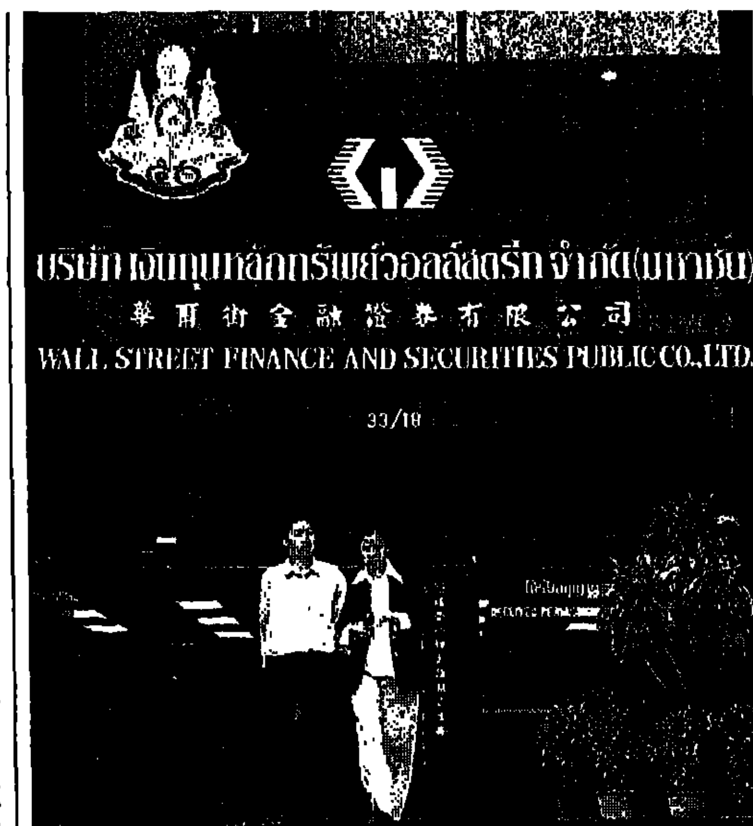
It is partly for that reason that the two preceding prime ministers, Chuan Leekpai (1992-95) and Banharn Silpa-archa (1995-96), allowed the crisis to gather momentum without doing much about it.

It is hard to gauge the government's degree of unpopularity, but over a period of many months its inability to take decisions has caused rumblings of discontent. A delegation of businessmen went to see Prem Tinsulanonda, the private adviser to the king, who remains a last recourse in a serious crisis — as he proved in May 1992 when he sent the generals back to their barracks.

After burning its fingers on that occasion, the military is in no mood to intervene this time. Its supreme commander, General Mongkol Ampornpisit, and its powerful army boss, General Chettha Tanajaro, have both "promised" that there will be no coup.

But with confidence in the administration being steadily eroded as the weeks go by, the army officers' attitude could eventually change. There is nothing to suggest that if they felt it necessary they would hold back from a solution that could be sold as an act of "national salvation".

But Chavalit still has a few cards up his sleeve. There has been considerably less wrangling within his government than under the previous administration, which was forced to dissolve the national assembly after only 18 months. What is more, no one seems keen to succeed him in the present circumstances.



Open and shut case . . . Investors leave a finance company in Bangkok last week after its emergency closure PHOTO: CHARLES DHARAPAK

Oddly enough, the economic crisis may help a more liberal constitution to be adopted. Parliament is due to vote on it on September 26. Under the new constitution, anyone appointed as a minister would have to stand down as a member of parliament, and the senate would be elected by direct suffrage. At present senators are appointed by the prime minister according to the terms of a constitution promulgated in 1991, when a military junta was in power.

(August 6)

Taking blame for bringing low a 'tiger'

EDITORIAL

FIRST Mexico, now Thailand: once again the International Monetary Fund has mounted a large-scale emergency rescue plan to prevent a local monetary crisis from degenerating into a full-blown regional recession.

With the support of several countries and help from international private banks, the IMF will make available to Thailand a total loan of $15 billion. In return, Bangkok has promised to put its financial house in order.

While one can only hope that this package will be an unqualified success (the global economy would suffer if the southeast Asian "tigers" were to run out of steam), questions need to be asked about who is responsible for this new financial crisis. Regional leaders have pointed an accusing finger at "speculators". While such speculators have indeed had a hand in the situation, the responsibility of the regional leaders themselves also needs to be stressed.

Politicians are quick to pick scapegoats when a monetary crisis blows up. And what better scapegoat than a foreign megamillionaire? With the backing of his counterparts in the region, Malaysia's prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, has accused the financier George Soros of being responsible for the whirlwind that has engulfed currencies in that part of the world. What he has in fact denounced, behind the scapegoat figure of Soros, are the financial markets.

It would, however, be unfair of the southeast Asian countries to accuse the markets. In the past 10 years, Thailand and its neighbours have been the main beneficiaries of the capital flows those markets have generated. The mistake made by those who manage global financial investment may have been rather to have invested too much of their capital in that part of the world and to have lent money to unreliable countries and corporations.

But financial upheavals of this kind do not occur unless more fundamental factors are at work. These are to be found, in Thailand today as in Mexico in 1994, in unsound economic management. Bangkok let high growth go to its head. It made a succession of unproductive investments and encouraged financial and property speculation.

A country cannot invest more than it saves or buy more than it sells. There is no conspiracy. At worst, what we have seen are investors taking advantage of mismanagement by national leaders. The IMF package aims to remind those leaders of basic principles, while at the same time saving investors' bacon.

(August 6)

Gaza counts the cost of Israeli blockade

Gilles Paris in Gaza City

ON AUGUST 1, the Erez checkpoint between Gaza and Israel was deserted. As always, that was bad news for the peace process. Bomb attacks that kill people in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem automatically result in the Israelis shutting off the occupied and autonomous territories of Gaza and the West Bank.

The inevitable upshot for the Palestinians, whatever the political affiliations of the suicide bombers, is food shortages and the throttling of their already shaky economy.

Since two bombs ripped through Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market on July 30, there has been almost no traffic in or out of Gaza. The buses that usually ferry workers to their jobs in Israel lie idle on the vast boarding areas next to the security checkpoint, as do the lorries that take local produce and building materials across the border. Israel is out of bounds to the Palestinians, as is their fruit and flowers.

"This is one of the tightest blockades I've experienced," says one man. Not even Arab newspapers printed in Ramallah and Jerusalem are allowed through. The television programme Good Morning, Jerusalem, which is put out by the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, has tried to compensate for that by reproducing the contents of papers like El Hayat El Jadida, El Ayam, and El Kuds.

Palestinians were almost starved of news from their Jericho-based radio station: the Israelis threatened to jam it in an attempt to prevent the broadcasting of any programme that might "incite hatred", but in the end gave up the idea.

Here, as in the West Bank, hundreds of Palestinian workers from the Gulf states who were visiting their families have been trapped by the closure.

A small group of bus drivers sitting in the shade of a hut in a busy Gaza City street refused at first to comment on last week's events. "I really don't care much about politics," said Adel. "I just want to be able to earn enough food. I've got eight mouths to feed at home, and I've been doing nothing for the past two days." Another driver remarked: "I'm neither for nor against — I'm with God and that's all."

But gradually they began to talk. "The way Netanyahu refused to accept Arafat's condolences was shameful," said a third man. The events of the past week seem almost to have improved the image of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which has been accused of corruption by members of parliament.

The bomb attack came as no surprise. As one of the drivers said: "Behind every bomb or outburst of violence you'll find an unfortunate Israeli decision. Remember Hebron or the archaeological tunnel last year?" (The controversial opening up of an ancient tunnel in Jerusalem's Old City triggered off an explosion of violence in the territories.)

In the bus drivers' opinion, there is little evidence for any connection between last week's bomb attack and the posters blaspheming against Islam that were put up in Hebron recently. They firmly believe that the Mahane Yehuda explosions came in response to the building of the Jewish settlement of Har Homa, or Jebel Abu Ghnein, in East Jerusalem.

"Their extremists make our extremists more popular with our people," said one man.

"Anyway I wouldn't call that terrorism — it was just a response," said Majid, who did not seem very concerned about the fact that civilians were paying the price. "During the intifada, there was no Palestinian army in Gaza, and that didn't stop the Israelis from shooting at civilians. They got their own back on us when things were going badly for them in Lebanon."

THEY did not seem overly concerned about the prospect of Israel sending troops, as it has threatened, into the areas officially controlled by the PA. "By all means let them do that," Mahmud said. "They've already occupied our territories for nearly 30 years, and what have they got to show for it? And they're still right here in Gaza," he added, nodding in the direction of the Jewish settlements of Netzarim and Kfar Darom, which cover more than a third of Gaza.

"The Israelis made peace with Egypt and Jordan after a lot of fighting, so why can't they do the same with us?" Adel said angrily. "What we're asking for today is only a very small part of what used to be our land. Isn't that in itself a token of peace? They should perhaps stop acting as if we didn't exist. We Palestinians were born here, we live here and we'll continue to live here — that's what the Israelis have to understand. No one can refuse us self-determination."

A little further on, in the shade of a public garden, a group of former Fatah Hawks, an organisation of young PLO activists, were angry. "At least there was some hope during the intifada," Jamal said.

"We're against the bombs. What we want is better living conditions," said Mohammed. "A young Israeli can earn money by working, he can make plans, go where he pleases, be free. I'm not jealous, I live under occupation.

"One day I came across a Jeep full of soldiers. They were quite friendly. They asked me if I had any cigarettes and I gave them some. In exchange they gave me their telephone numbers, but I never called them. That kind of thing will be impossible as long as the situation remains as it is."

Mohammed and Jamal earn a pittance working for a PA-sponsored anti-drugs programme. But they are better off than a friend of theirs, who has been unemployed for five years. The friend remonstrated against Westerners for "doing nothing".

"The settlers will get their revenge by killing dozens of Palestinians," he said. "Then Clinton will step in and put a lid on the crisis, and we'll be back at square one. The blockade could last a long time."

(August 3-4)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

CLASSIFIED

When no one seemed to care about the fate of a missing Belgian Muslim girl, her sister decided to take action. **Stephen Bates** on the teenager who opened the eyes and hearts of a nation

Chronicle of a death ignored

FIVE years ago this month a pretty, nine-year-old Moroccan girl skipped down the road in Brussels to buy a pot of yoghurt and disappeared. What happened to Loubna Benaissa has now convulsed Belgium with guilt and recrimination and forced the whole country to reconsider its attitudes — to crime, to the police and, above all, to the silent, little-considered and ill-used minority in its midst, its Muslim immigrants.

This is solely due to Loubna's big sister, Nabela, still only 18, who has fought a tireless campaign on her missing sister's behalf, first just to keep her name in front of the police authorities and latterly expressing with poise and dignity a growing outrage at the breakdown of the incompetent Belgian judicial system.

"I don't know whether I am an adult with one foot still in childhood or a child who events have made to grow up too fast. I feel as if I was in Snow White and met the wicked witch. I didn't want to be thrown into adult life," she says.

But she has been. There have been a best-selling book, five national prizes and countless television appearances — all while studying for the baccalaureate.

That any teenager could have the moral and physical courage — or the maturity — to do all this is remarkable. That it has been done from a background of deep poverty and obscurity is extraordinary. But, above all, that Nabela has done it in a devoutly Catholic country while wearing the costume of a Muslim is nothing short of astonishing. She has become, simply, a national heroine.

This week has been heavy in Belgium with the weight of mournful anniversaries. It is a year since police stumbled on two teenage girls held captive in an underground cellar in Charleroi by paedophile Marc Dutroux.

The national rejoicing at their safe release was shortlived, for within 24 hours the police found the bodies of two missing eight-year-old girls Dutroux had abducted, allowed to starve to death in his cellar, and then buried in his back garden. Later they discovered the corpses of two missing teenagers he had also killed and buried.

Loubna's disappearance in August 1992 received little publicity and little investigation. It was the middle of the summer holidays and the police clearly did not put themselves out. In the outraged words of a belated parliamentary investigation earlier this year, they expended less attention on the case than they would have done for a missing wallet.

On the morning of Loubna's disappearance, Nabela had taken her to the local supermarket, just around the corner from where the family lived in a run-down, dusty area of central Brussels. When they got back, they realised they had forgotten the yoghurt and, as it was only 300 metres away, Loubna was sent back to buy it. She never returned.

Nabela's book In The Name Of My Sister tells what happened next. In prose the more moving for its sparseness, she tells how her mother eventually rushed upstairs to wake their father, asleep after his nightshift cleaning railway carriages. She remembers him rushing down the stairs in panic and out into the street to look for his little girl. "In our life, until Loubna's disappearance, we were a happy family, we had never known misfortune."

When they reported Loubna missing, the police were casual. It took them some time to start looking for her, without result — the family was told bluntly that officers suspected she had been sent back to Morocco for an arranged marriage. As the years passed, nothing happened.

When Nabela periodically visited the local station to ask about progress, a file of ongoing leads would be waved at her. She was not told that there were actually none and that the police were no longer looking.

What the family did not know, and the police did not tell them, was that at the filling station along Loubna's 300m walk to the supermarket there worked a convicted paedophile called Patrick Derochette. He had been convicted eight years before of molesting young boys whom he had lured or carried downstairs to the filling station's cellar.

He was sent for psychiatric treatment but, remarkably, was pronounced "cured" and released after 50 days despite a medical report stating he was impulsively aggressive towards those weaker than himself. He returned to his job at the pumps.

The police did look around the petrol station and gave a cursory glance at its cellar, but the local sniffer dog handler was on holiday and they did not bother to go back when he returned. Instead, they accepted Derochette's claim that he had been having lunch with his brother that day. Had they ever looked more closely, they might have found Loubna's body four-and-a-half years before they eventually did.

For it was not until March this year, in the wake of the public outcry that followed the Dutroux affair, that the police finally got round to reopening the inquiry and searching the petrol station cellar properly. When they did so, amid the junk of car parts and rubbish, they opened a metal trunk and found Loubna's body still inside.

That Derochette had never troubled to move it says something about his confidence in police efficiency. When he was finally arrested, he told officers that Loubna had banged her head on the edge of the trunk during a struggle on the day of her disappearance and he had tossed her inside because he did not know what to do. When he opened the trunk a few days later he was apparently surprised to find that she had died.

This may not be the true story. A friend of Loubna's, who knew she was missing, claimed 10 days after her disappearance to have seen her in the back of a car. She even remembered the numberplate. The make of the car was the same as Derochette's and the numberplate matched his, except one digit was wrong. Naturally, the police never bothered to follow up the lead or note any coincidences.



'Until Loubana's disappearance we were a happy family' . . . Nabela with her best-selling book In The Name Of My Sister PHOTO: OLIVIER MATTHYS

THERE the story might have rested, but for the unrelated Dutroux affair a year ago. Nabela took the lead for the family in attempting to maintain police interest and public awareness. Her father and mother, despite living in Brussels for 20 years, do not speak much French and so it was left to her, the eldest of their eight children, to try to stir attention. The family never dared take a holiday, thinking that one day Loubna might come home.

There was little public interest. Television stations that would later fall over themselves to interview Nabela refused to take up the case. Every time her father put up missing posters in tram shelters, the cleaners took them down overnight.

The contrast with the official energy and public concern when the white son of an industrialist went missing was marked: he was recovered unharmed within hours.

The police eventually took away Loubna's only surviving school exercise book and managed to destroy it while looking for fingerprints. At school, a science teacher suggested to Nabela that Loubna had been sent back to Morocco.

Immigrants among the ethnic minorities in Brussels do not find this surprising. They are routinely treated with contempt by officialdom. There are 70,000 Moroccans in the Belgian capital, mainly in ill-paid, menial jobs, few speaking much French and even fewer any Flemish. Old ladies clutch their handbags tighter as they approach and Belgians casually tell you that it is a good job they are there, otherwise there would be no one to clean the streets.

In 1995, when the two eight-year-old girls abducted by Dutroux went missing, in contrast to Loubna's disappearance, there was an outcry. Every shop carried posters with the little girls' pictures on them. Their disappearance was constant, front page news. Only in the incompetence of the police inquiry was there similarity of treatment.

When their bodies were found there was an immediate convulsion of anger, anguish and shame from a nation that had assumed it was friendly towards children and looked after them properly. The revelations of paedophilia shattered all that.

After Dutroux was finally arrested it turned out the police knew all about him too, had been warned what he was planning to do in his cellar and had even searched the place three times — once hearing children's voices in the process — without managing to find the little girls while they were still alive.

Slowly, in the outpourings of rage and frustration, Loubna's case came to the surface. It did not do so completely naturally: when 250,000 Belgians marched through Brussels last October to protest about missing children a billboard mounted on a van at the head of the procession listed the names of all those who had disappeared over the previous 20 years. Except Loubna.

When the van stopped, outraged Arab youths clambered aboard and scrawled her name over every remaining space while the mainly white crowd wandered past indifferently.

Nabela's dignity and natural eloquence were gradually noticed. On television programmes, seated next to her silent father, clearly wrapped in his own private misery, her outrage was clear. The police authorities — pompous, red-faced, complacent-looking men — brought on to the same programmes to assert the seriousness of their investigation appeared just shifty and incompetent by comparison.

Nabela gave evidence to the parliamentary inquiry set up by anxious politicians desperate not to be engulfed in the tide of national contempt.

She was taken to meet the prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene — another red-faced, complacent man, who did not even bother to interrupt his holiday when the bodies of Dutroux's victims were found — and she was introduced to King Albert II, Queen Paola and Queen Fabiola.

ON THE DAY that Loubna's body was found the parliamentary inquiry finished its work; Nabela had at last made her sister a household name and public grief was renewed. Her picture was now routinely mounted beside those of the little girls on car windscreens and in front-room windows.

It seemed natural for Nabela to give the oration at the funeral, addressing her sister directly: "We were so far away from realising that monsters lurked at the end of our road, that hell awaited you. During those years we searched the whole world without giving up hope and yet you were there, right next to us. The men who had all the means to find you did not do it and I do not expect that they sleep peacefully at night . . ."

More than 20,000 people attended Loubna's funeral, watching proceedings on giant television screens in the park outside the Brussels mosque.

Then, to assuage the national guilt, came the awards for Nabela. For advancing the cause of women, for advancing the cause of integration, for multiculturalism; prizes from the King Baudouin Foundation and the Belgian Human Rights League; and, perhaps unlikeliest of all, Brussels Citizen of the Year, voted for by 300,000 readers of the city's weekly free newspaper.

However, her sudden prominence has not pleased everyone. Racists contested the newspaper prize on the grounds that, as a Muslim, Nabela could not be counted a Bruxellois, even though she was born in the city. And some immigrant groups, particularly among disaffected, second-generation youths, resent her prominence.

It helps battered Belgian self-esteem that she seems remarkably free of recriminations: "Who am I? An immigrant? I don't like that image. Don't think of me like that. I am Belgian, even though it says on my identity card that I am Moroccan."

The Belgians have had quite a few attitudes changed this year. Maybe Nabela has played a part in that, though, as she says sadly: "I would have preferred to remain anonymous, nice and warm with my little sister at my side."



Royal delights

Paul Evans

THE sound of 8,000 pairs of feet shuffling across the red gravel sounds like torrential rain but, despite a few dark clouds, not a drop falls on this bizarre parade. This long and salubrious queue of folks is dressed to the nines — flowering with all kinds of hats, frocks, suits, uniforms, robes — a human herbaceous border that seeded itself around Buckingham Palace and is now on the move, pouring into the secret world within.

I'm a hanger-on, accompanying my wife Nancy who got the invitation for her work with Re-Solv, the charity for the prevention of solvent abuse. This is a family outing. Dressing up for the occasion is a curious levelling process. I wanted one of those morning suits because the top hat would be ideal for collecting cuttings. But I was persuaded against it.

Assembled in the garden, the border scatters like an exotic flowering of weeds across the lawn. There's a strange muttering which builds into a palpable silence. The scattering re-forms into knots and parterres, which, on the carefully choreographed arrival of the royals, ripples with claps and whispers in the finest expression of British glee. I wonder how many others are suppressing an almost uncontrollable desire to do something rash. Then it's tea and sarnies.

As a nation of gardeners, we have gardened everything — our parks, towns, countryside, our myths, institutions, even ourselves. Everything is carefully cultivated, the wild restrained, even the dogs. I've always wanted to meet the corgis and there they are, in the shadows round the side of the palace, a pack of stumpy, ferocious little buggers going about their royal business with gracious determination.

The herbaceous border looks splendid with the tall reds of monarda, gold of inulas and subtle shades of blues, pinks and purples — a very Gertrude Jekyll scheme of understated sophistication. These flowers, so highly bred over generations, still nod back in their floral dreamtime to the wild prairie. Then, suddenly, a favourite flower which reminds me of Oswestry railway station — the pure white variety of rosebay willowherb. In its common carmine pink form, the pernicious fireweed wouldn't last five seconds here but this desirable rarity takes pride of place, sort of.

The 40 acres of Buck House gardens has everything you'd expect from a royal park: a great lawn that sweeps like an aircraft carrier; big stately trees, a fiddly rose garden; the 175-yard-long herbaceous border; a four-acre lake and an immense pot — the Waterloo Vase.

Immaculately tidy Victorian shrubberies baffle the noise of invisible traffic beyond. It's hard to imagine being in the centre of the metropolis — it feels like countryside. Looking around for wildlife, I spy two flies in deep communion on the one remaining thistle .

Down at the pond, royal ducks are dabbling with their chicks. A regal heron poses on an island. It's a pleasant surprise to find Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed. These are two of the most maligned plants. Brought into British gardens by Victorian enthusiasm, they have escaped and colonised to such an extent that land managers now go on weed warfare courses to try to get rid of them. These wonderful plants are botanical outlaws, and impossible to dislodge now from British life. Good on 'em, and long may they thrive. There's something very satisfying in this gesture of ecological defiance.



ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Chess Leonard Barden

LAST month's Dortmund super-tournament confirmed that Russia's 22-year-old Vladimir Kramnik is now the most serious human challenger to Garry Kasparov, the undisputed world number one since 1985. Kramnik was unbeaten with 6½/9, a point clear of India's Vishy Anand and two-and-a-half ahead of Anatoly Karpov, who no longer seems the force of old.

The problem for Kramnik is that sponsors and the media regard K v K or, indeed, any all-Russian matches as a yawn; so the Muscovite may have to advance his cause in this December's knock-out world championship, risking an undignified early-round elimination.

Their Dortmund game showed just why Kramnik is now so strong while Karpov has declined. The younger grandmaster attacked, pressed, niggled and regrouped until Karpov's defences collapsed under time pressure. However, I cannot help feeling that the resilient Anatoly of old would have survived such positions.

Kramnik v Karpov

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 b6 3 g3 Bb7 4 Bg2 e6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 0-0 7 Nc3 White used to reach this Queen's Indian position with d4 in place of Re1, allowing Black to simplify by Ne4; but here 7 . . . Ne4 8 Nxe4 Bxe4 9 d3 gains time to set up a pawn centre.

d5 8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 e4 Nxc3 10 bxc3 Nc6 An interesting though risky decision. Since c5 11 d4 gives White a pawn centre anyway, Karpov decides to avoid exchanges and snipe with pieces from the flanks; but Kramnik now goes straight for attack. **11 d4 Na5 12 h4 Re8 13 h5 h6 14 Ne5 Bd6 15 Bf4 Qe7 16 Qg4 Kh8 17 Nd3 Rad8 18 Rad1 Bc6 19 e5 Ba3 20 Bxc6 Nxc6 21 Re4** White uses his extra space to channel Q and R to the K-side. **Qd7 22 Qf3 Bf8!** Typical defence technique. The bishop guards g7 and avoids getting in the way of Black's defenders on the second and third ranks.

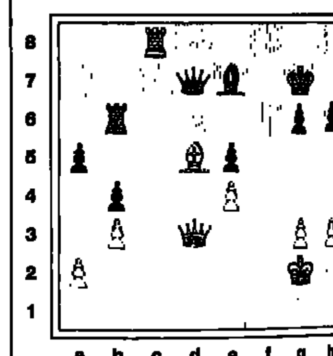
23 Bc3 Na5 24 g4 Nc4 25 g5 The h pawn is blocked, so its partner tries to force open attacking lines. **Nxe3 26 fxe3 hxg5 27 Rg4 Qe7 28 Rf1 Rd7 29 Qg3 f6 30 c4 Qa3!** Cool play. White's pieces are fully committed, so Karpov swoops on the base camp at c3/d4.

31 exf6 Qxc3 32 f7! Ready to meet Qxd4+? by 33 Kh1 Rc8 34 Ne5 Rd6 35 Ng6+ Kh7 36 e5. **Rc8 33 d5! exd5 34 e5 c5 35 Rf3 c4 36 Nf2 Qe1+ 37 Kg2 Be7?** Losing quickly, but there may be no defence since if c3 38 Rxg5 c2 39 h6 c1Q 40 hxg7+ Bxg7 41 Qh3+ mates. Perhaps 37 . . . Rc6!?

38 Rxg5! Bxg5 39 f8Q+ Resigns If Rxf8 40 Rxf8+ Kh7 41 Qxg5 wins.

The Mind Sports Olympiad on August 18-24 at the Royal Festival Hall on London's South Bank includes a £6,000 five-day chess open with main, grading and junior prizes and medals. If you want to try your skill there, write to PO Box 13388, London NW3 2ZF or call (+44)171-485 9146.

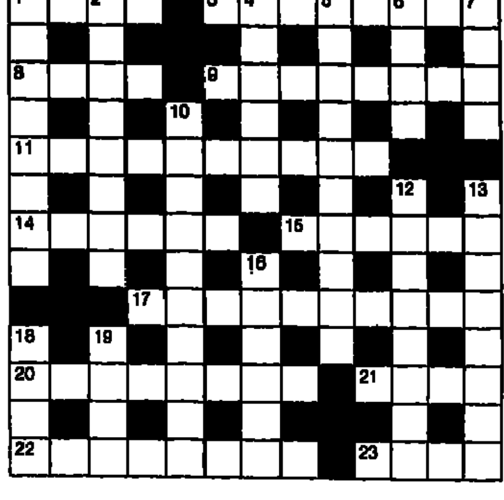
No 2485



Karpov v Hubner 1979. It's not often that a simple position defeats a world champion, a leading grandmaster, plus several eminent commentators. Karpov went 1 Qc4 Rf6 2 Rc7 Qd6 and the game was later drawn. What did they all overlook?

No 2484: 1 e4+. If Kxe4 2 Re2, or Kc6/d6 2 exd8N, or Ke6 2 exd8Q, or Kc5 2 Qc7, or Kc4 2 Qb4.

Quick crossword no. 379



Across

1 Solid figure (4)
3 Fault-finding (8)
8 Well off (4)
9 Breakdown (or treatment for one!) (8)
11 Study of the Pharaohs etc (10)
14 Poison used on darts (6)
15 Measure of oil (6)
17 May beetle (10)
20 Strong curtain fabric (8)
21 Elevated (4)
22, 23 Panorama from above? (4'1-3,4)

Down

1 Coin of the realm (8)
2 "Not in my —" (4,4)
4 Make one feel resentment (6)
5 Science of sending messages (10)
6 Expense (4)
7 Final (4)
10 Having a snoring sound (10)
12 Drawings on walls etc (8)
13 Verse form devised by Bentley (8)
16 Very thin (6)
18 Blackleg (4)
19 Close (4)

Last week's solution

CAUGHT ABHOR
A S O W O E
ASSESS FABRIC
T L T I A E
GLUE IMITATED
E S L N I E
DISTINCTION
A N T I M E
DISMAYED PERT
O U L E E V
NELSON NOTION
I A N C U U
SERVE CENSUS

Bridge Zia Mahmood

I MAY have found the perfect cure for jet lag. The other week, arriving overnight from New York, I went straight to the big game at TGR's. Those of you who know about H, the Partner From Hell, will realise that since I had just cut him for the first Chicago, I could not afford to succumb to any kind of weariness. H immediately lived up to his reputation. I picked up these cards as North:

♠A65 ♥QJ73 ♦108642 ♣5

and the bidding started like this:

South	West	North	East
H		Zia	
			2♠
3♠	Double	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	?	

Two spades was a strong opening — the Acol two bid — and H's three spades showed a two-suited hand of some kind, presumably hearts and a minor. When the opponents rested in four spades, I could be certain we had a good fit, and a sacrifice seemed worthwhile. Just in case H had the minors, I made a takeout bid of 4NT— it's as well to take insurance against whatever he might have perpetrated.

East, to my surprise, bid five diamonds over 4NT, apparently a natural call. I was expecting H to bid five hearts over this, since he seemed to be marked with hearts and clubs — but he bid six clubs instead! Why hadn't H passed five diamonds or doubled it, if he had the minors? I didn't want to play in six clubs, so when West doubled I retreated to six diamonds. East doubled that, and H ran in turn to six hearts, which was doubled by the whole of the Bayswater Road.

Only H could bypass five hearts doubled to end up in six hearts doubled, I reflected as I put the dummy down:

	North ♠A65 ♥QJ73 ♦108642 ♣5	
West ♠10843 ♥K10 ♦Q5 ♣AJ1094		East ♠KQJ972 ♥8 ♦AKJ97 ♣2
	South ♠None ♥A96542 ♦3 ♣KQ8763	

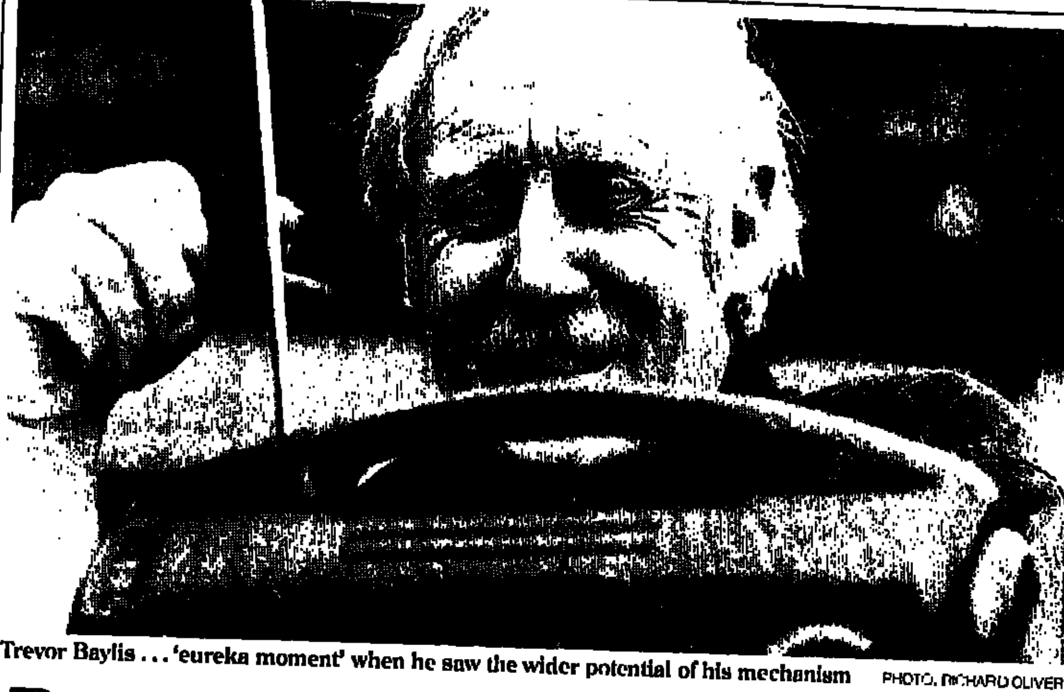
West, a studious type, knew all about leading trumps against sacrifices, and the possession of a holding such as K10 doubleton wasn't going to deflect him from his principles.

He found the scientific — some might say idiotic — opening shot of the ten of hearts, which H won with dummy's jack. H discarded his diamond loser on my ace of spades, then led a club from the dummy. West won H's king with the ace and went into a trance, whereat H informed him that it would make no difference.

This was not true, for if West had stuck to his guns and continued trumps, H would have had no play for the contract.

However, when West switched instead to a diamond, H could arrange to ruff three clubs in dummy and make his slam. But, satanically demonstrating that his attempted falsehood was actually the truth, H did not play the hand in this obvious fashion, and went down anyway by drawing the last trump himself!

The effort involved in resisting the overwhelming urge to strangle my partner completely washed away any vestige of jet lag.



Trevor Baylis . . . 'eureka moment' when he saw the wider potential of his mechanism PHOTO: RICHARD OLIVER

Batteries not included

Simon Bowers

THE MAN who became a millionaire after he invented the clockwork radio believes he is set to make a second fortune from the clockwork computer.

Trevor Baylis, who works alone from his house in southwest London, is in discussion with Apple Computer Incorporated about developing the product which he believes could put a computer in every home in Africa.

Mr Baylis, aged 60, was at the Commonwealth conference on education in Botswana last week when he had what he described as "a eureka moment", realising that the mechanism used to power the clockwork radio could power a computer.

The clockwork radio revolutionised communications in parts of the Third World where there is little access to electricity. The radios, which are now made at a rate of 20,000 a month, can run for an hour after a two-minute winding and do not need batteries. It is hoped that the clockwork computer will have a similar impact.

Mr Baylis succeeded in getting a low-powered laptop computer to operate for 13 minutes in Botswana. "It was a moment which had me giggling and screeching," he said. "It was just a bit of lateral thinking. There's an inventor in all of us."

His demonstration brought a round of applause from delegates. Baroness Blackstone, representing the British government at the conference, said: "I thought it was an exciting new idea which could hopefully lead to increased use of technology in Commonwealth schools."

A spokesman for Apple said that the company was very excited about the prospect of working with Mr Baylis, who used to be a professional swimmer and a stunt man. "Our South African office has had a huge number of calls from all over Africa inquiring about the clockwork laptop," a spokesman said. "News of this innovation has spread rapidly over the Internet."

Mr Baylis received a series of rebuffs when he first tried to get backing for the radio, called the BayGen Freeplay Radio. "I even had a letter from an august engineer telling me that the clockwork radio, which was merrily playing in my left hand, couldn't possibly work unless the spring weighed 100 pounds," he said.

A television programme on the invention finally brought the backing he required and now Mr Baylis is worth millions.

He has complained that too many companies are unwilling to take risks. When the British Design Council was shown the radio it said it would never attract investment.

Letter from Bamako Robert Lacville

Mâh passes on

AS I stepped off the late night plane, someone told me: "Welcome! I hope the trip was good. Your mother has died". Which mother? I quickly found out that this was Mâh, the mother of Old Brother, gently expired at the age of 103. I admit I was relieved — so many people in Africa die young. The deceased "mother" might have been any one of a number of elderly ladies because the mother of each close friend counts also as your mother. But friends don't come any closer than Old Brother, our next-door neighbour for 10 years.

I arrived for the funeral in time for breakfast. Old Brother told me how Mâh had died. My plane had been due to take off from Brussels before 1pm but was delayed. We finally took off at 2pm, and Mâh breathed her last at 3pm. "She called you home for her funeral," he said. All day, people repeated the same message. By the end of the day I too was convinced the old lady had waited for my plane to take off before summoning Old Brother to be with her for her final sigh.

Africa doesn't believe in coincidence. Africa believes strongly in the power of the ancestors. Mâh was perfectly capable of knowing that my plane was delayed. The elderly move slowly towards the state of "ancestor" even before they die. "She is so old, she is almost dead," said a young cousin a few months ago, expressing veneration.

The African tradition sees death as a passage before rebirth. Death is a natural part of life. It isn't death that we fear in Africa: it is the ancestors we fear, in case we have done anything to annoy them.

As we get older, our social status increases. After 103 years, Mâh had reached the venerable state of ancestor. I have to admit that, physically, she was almost dead. We actually prepared her funeral three years ago, but she came out of her coma. Thereafter she led a very quiet existence. In the past six months, when I visited her she was always asleep. As her doctor remarked cheerfully while we waited for lunch: "For the past year, Mâh was in a state of hibernation."

Other brothers and sisters arrived. The sisters went inside where they were washing the body with a lot of praying and lamenting. Nephews unloaded chairs and put up awnings between the trees. Nieces chopped onions and meat and cooked a sack of rice for lunch. The brothers and cousins sat around and talked and greeted visitors. During the morning we must have received 300 people. Most stayed for 10 minutes, presented their condolences, and left to go about their business until the burial at 4pm. The old men stayed longer. If the elderly have a "business", it is going to funerals.

We talked history and politics, or I listened as the old men reminisced happily about their childhood, when Mâh had been such a good mother to so many children. These men in their 70s had lived in her compound and eaten her food. Mâh was a strong personality who loved kids and who left many good memories. She seems to have fed the entire Independence generation, including members of every Malian government since 1960.

As we chatted, Old Brother's cellular telephone rang. He announced that a great niece in Abidjan had given birth that afternoon. "It was a girl," observed a retired Colonel. This was not a question, simply a statement of the obvious. "It was a girl," confirmed Old Brother. Everyone knows what the baby's name will be. In silence, each of us reflected with satisfaction that Mâh was already reborn.

After lunch the crowd gathered in the heat. Women wearing headscarves passed into the compound, men in embroidered robes joined us under the trees and awnings. At 4pm the women surrendered Mâh's body. We lined up for a final prayer, 600 men shoulder to shoulder behind the oldest Imam. Then we carried Mâh to lie beside her husband.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

***WHICH* country has the easiest driving test?**

THE SMALL Greek island of Symi has a test that consists of driving from the clock tower to the town square along the straight harbour road (a distance of some 500 metres); turning the car round and driving back. One candidate has managed to fail nine times — the last time for stopping in mid-test to chat with a passing relative. — *Steve Pinder, London*

THE easiest is (or was a few years ago) Afghanistan. There was no test because there were no driving licences. But equally one could argue that the test in Afghanistan, like Saudi Arabia, is the toughest in the world. Women are automatically banned from driving, and once you've failed the sex test there's little chance of passing on subsequent occasions. — *Glyn Ford, Mossley, Lancashire*

***WHAT* use is vitamin C to an orange?**

YOU don't see many oranges with colds. — *Terry Shane, London*

UNLIKE other plant parts, fruits are designed to be eaten, thus ensuring a wide distribution of seeds. The fruits are tasty in order to encourage animals to eat them, but it is also worthwhile for them to contain nutrients those animals need. — *Tony Green, Ipswich, Suffolk*

***WHY* are the markers in the game of Monopoly in the shapes of a racing car, a scottie dog, a battleship, an iron, a top hat and an old boot?**

CHARLES DARROW, an American, invented Monopoly in 1933. Company legend has it that the tokens used in the game were charms from his wife's bracelet. Although versions of Monopoly have been produced in 25 languages, the tokens are always the same — except for the intergalactic version, which uses characters from the film Star Wars. After inventing Monopoly, Darrow could well afford to buy a new bracelet for his wife, He retired at 46, a millionaire. — *Claire Sawkins, Waddingtons Games, Leeds*

***WHY* does paper yellow with age?**

THE main component of paper is cellulose which, in its purest form, is nearly white and, if kept in unpolluted, cool, dry conditions, will discolour very little with time. However, most paper contains a variety of impurities, some of which would be yellow had they not been bleached. Many are affected by oxygen, acid, sunshine and other factors which change their chemical nature, converting them to yellowish materials.

High-quality modern paper will last centuries with little change. Even photocopy paper will retain its whiteness much better than its predecessors. — *Simon Barcham, Maidstone, Kent*

Any answers?

***HOW* is sea level measured?** — *K MacHarg, Quito, Equador*

***HOW* did the colour red come to be associated with danger and the colour green with no danger?** — *Ramesh Gupta, Canberra, Australia*

***CAN* pyramid-selling schemes ever work?** — *Mario Cavalli, London*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

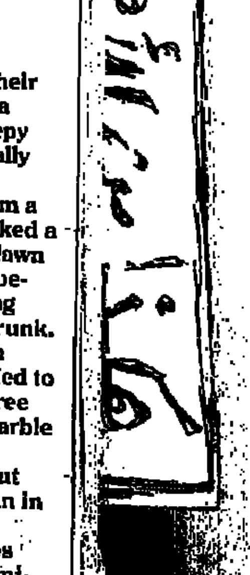
A Country Diary

Jeremy Smith

ARMIDALE, New South Wales: The heavy frosts of late winter are failing to curb the natural exuberance of imminent spring. Wattles in the garden are in fluffy yellow bloom and green shoots are thrusting up from forgotten daffodil bulbs, even though the grass is sere and most trees deeply dormant. Birds' behaviour has gone a little crazy as they respond to an unfamiliar surge of hormones. Parrots and pardalotes are pairing off, scrapping among themselves and showing interest in nestboxes. Wood ducks are prospecting for hollows in the big, old gum trees, providing a somewhat surreal sight as they balance on branches silhouetted against an apricot sun in the morning mist.

Most engaging of all are the black-backed magpies, crow-sized birds with complex social behaviour and incongruously beautiful voices. Our local tribe are old friends. The house is apparently the focal point of their territory, and they provide a dawn chorus to stir my sleepy brain. Now they are unusually noisy and playful. Today I watched as one dangled from a wattle bush by one foot, picked a spray, then dropped to the lawn to offer it to its companion before pulling back and playing hide-and-seek around the trunk. Another swooped at them in mock aggression, but wheeled to land beside them and all three threw back their heads to warble their lovely lilting song. Yet another toyed with sticks, but nest-building has yet to begin in earnest.

A month from now stories will start to circulate of dominant male magpies attacking people near their nest trees, diving from behind to deliver sharp and often bloody pecks to the back of the head. But the members of our domestic tribe are non-violent. They perceive no hazard and ignore us as they do the cattle just across the fence.



Where there's smoke, there's buffalo dung

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

CALLING ALL campers! **Bush Tucker Man** (Discovery), whose name you have to say so carefully, is back to show us how it should be done.

Always pitch your tent on high ground ("so the crocodiles don't get too friendly"). I do this myself and have never been bothered by crocs. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, as sported by Bush Tucker himself, to catch fruit bat droppings. Repel mosquitoes with water buffalo dung. "The theory is you put it on the fire and, because it burns with a lot of smoke, it helps keep the mosquitoes away. Always give 'em a kick first," (the cow pats, not the mossies) "that way you'll know if they're cooked enough."

He was camping by the Mary River in what he called succinctly "the top end". The top end of Australia, that is. Once upon a time some old prospector, opening up this desperate territory, must have named the Mary River after a female of his acquaintance. And you know immediately what the female looked like. She was what people used to call a fine figure of a woman. The Mary sweeps in languorous, voluptuous curves and sometimes simply loosens her corsets and overflows. In her curves — for she has no angles — she wears large pink lotus lilies. She does not resemble Kate Moss in any particular.

I was relieved to notice a location caterer was listed among the credits. I've never known a TV crew prepared to live on fruit bat ("Knock 'em out of the air with a throwing stick") and lotus lily seeds ("You've got to use a pair of pliers or a lump of rock to crack 'em").

Talking of food, I thought Ainsley Harriott, who has barbecued himself around the world as far as Jamaica (**Ainsley's Barbecue Bible**, BBC2), might like to hear what Noël Coward served the Queen Mother when she dropped in for lunch. Coward was then living at Firefly, once a pirate's look-out in Jamaica.

Like the actor manager he was, he had a full dress rehearsal the day before, trying out the whole menu on the dog. Or, to be precise, on the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava. The reviews were ecstatic. Alas for the best laid plans. The next day, 20 minutes before the Queen Mother arrived, "The fish mousse collapsed in a grey heap and had the consistency of an ordinary Slazenger tennis ball."

A happy thought saved the day. "We introduced the Queen Mother to Bullshots. She had two and was delighted." In case your fish mousse collapses as royalty are rolling up, I have checked the recipe with the Savoy's American bar. Vodka, Worcester sauce, Tabasco, salt, fresh lemon and cold consommé. Shake well and the hell with fish mousse.

Annie (Liz Crowther) is the mother in the daily soap, **Family Affairs** (Channel 5). It is based on a family, not a community, so Annie is at the epicentre of the egg beater.

The things that poor woman has to put up with. People arrive in waves with suitcases and terrible secrets. Annie's father-in-law, a markedly Geordie miner ("Ah've med sum bacon butties"), moved in when his wife fell in the canal. Annie's father moved in when his wife threw him out and his golf clubs after him.

Family Affairs is 100 episodes old this month. Five shows a week is a gruelling, unprecedented schedule. Exterior shots are at the mercy of the weather. This week there were passionate heart-to-hearts conducted in the pouring rain. You can see the shoestring. It is rather touching.

A ballet out of step with its legacy

Dan Glaister on a Kirov row over reviving Mikhail Fokine's choreography

AN ambitious project to bring the original choreography of the Kirov Ballet to Western audiences has foundered after the dancers of one of the world's greatest ballet companies fell out with the granddaughter of the legendary choreographer, Mikhail Fokine.

The highlight of the Kirov's current residency in London was expected to be a performance of the original 1905 choreography for The Dying Swan, made by Fokine as a declaration of love to Anna Pavlova. The publicity for the Kirov's month-long season promised that Isabelle Fokine, the choreographer's 30-year-old American granddaughter, would "restage three ballets especially for London, using documents, notations and films of early rehearsals from the Fokine archive".

But a programme note on the first night stated that due to "unforeseen circumstances" the company would perform its traditional version of The Dying Swan and not the version promised by Ms Fokine.

At the last minute, the performance was scrapped, officially due to a lack of rehearsal time. However, it appears that many of the Kirov's dancers refused to work with Ms Fokine, claiming the choreography was not the authentic legacy of her grandfather. Although cancelled for the first night, a compromise was reached for the second night with Yulia Makhalina performing the Pavlova version.

Ms Fokine said: "The last week has been a bit tense. I am sorry it has turned out this way. I'm attempting to recreate what my grandfather specifically states. With due respect to the Kirov, there is no one around who worked with my grandfather."

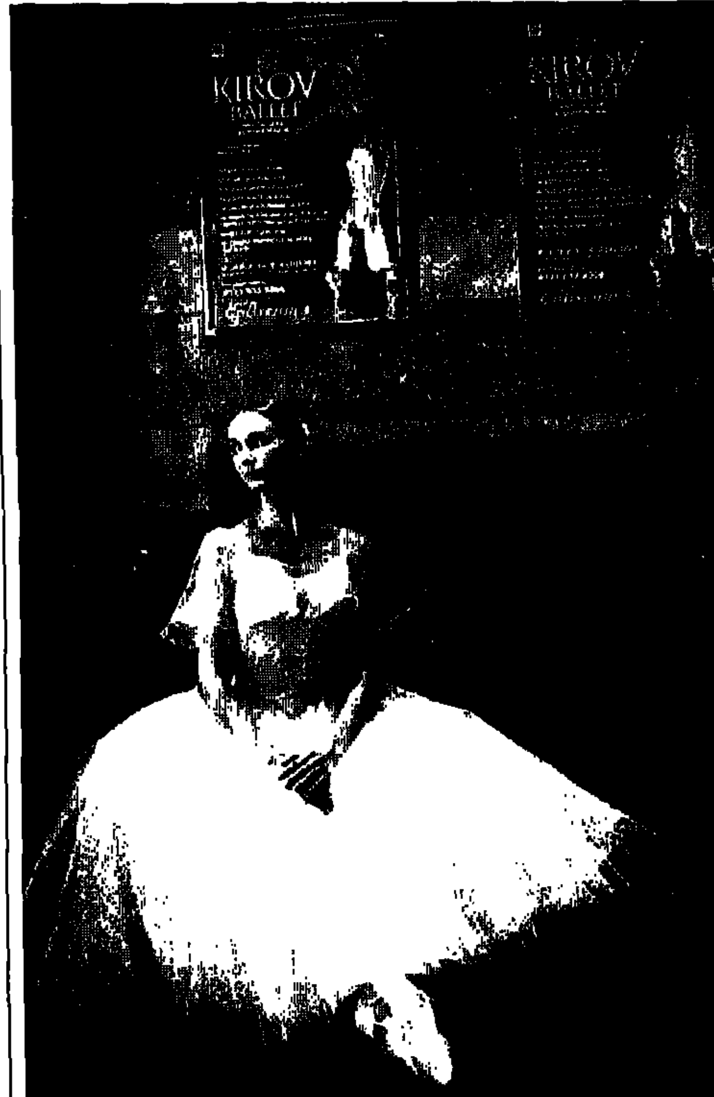
Fokine's work, which the Kirov ignored under Soviet rule until the 1980s, is credited with being this century's first important development in classical ballet. He produced the stagings for Diaghilev that launched the Ballet Russe, and changed the nature of dramatic expression in dance.

The change in the programme is a blow to the Kirov, which is fighting to maintain its position as one of the world's leading ballet companies. The Kirov has been plagued by financial and administrative problems. This dispute will be seen as the latest unfortunate incident.

At the heart of the dispute lies the question of control over choreography. Traditionally, choreography was passed from dancer to dancer, and, much like a game of Chinese whispers, over time it could end up significantly different to the original intention of the choreographer.

An accepted form of standard notation for dance steps and the advent of video facilities has meant that a choreographer can retain much more control over changes that are made to specific pieces. Most recently, ballet choreography has become subject to copyright law.

Ms Fokine said: "I'm very uncomfortable about being the choreography police, though I recognise that sometimes it's necessary. I hope to use the powers of visual persuasion rather than coming in with court papers."



Svetlana Zabarova in Giselle, but there is disagreement with Isabelle Fokine over reviving The Dying Swan PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Spectacular, but little illumination

THEATRE
Lyn Gardner

TO THE beat of drums, the stamp of a foot and a distant chant the Globe Theatre in London bursts into spectacle with the first visiting company in its international festival.

Welcome Msomi's Zulu adaptation of Macbeth, Umabatha, is an event whose exuberance sometimes seems at odds with its tale of murderous acts. It is the all-singing, all-dancing, all-drumming interludes that grab the attention, not the moral implications of a story that has been transferred from Scotland to Africa. Macbeth becomes Mabatha; Banquo is Bhangane.

Msomi's adaptation follows Shakespeare's play scene for scene, but tone and interpretation are different. Evil creeps up unexpectedly on Thabani Patrick Tshanini's Mabatha, an over-eager, puppyish chap who is hen-pecked by his wife, an exotic bird with raven plumage. It is the humour that is most marked in a piece of traditional storytelling that is never particularly subtle but has a racy momentum.

The weird sisters are an over-excitable, leather-skirted trio; Mabatha's breakdown at the feast is brought on by a double take of Morecambe and Wise proportions on seeing Bhangane's masked ghost while doing the Zulu equivalent of line dancing. If you know the play reasonably well it is all good fun.

Where the production comes into its own is in the set-piece battles, intricately choreographed dances of death during which the men posture and preen like plumed peacocks. The piece celebrates the domestic rhythm of African life. Women braid one another's hair and make bread in the background as murderous acts are planned to the fore.

It is undeniably a stirring spectacle, but while I welcome a piece with as much popular appeal as Umabatha, I cannot help feeling it is a form of tourist theatre which invites us to celebrate the exotic and treat it as a photo opportunity.

Nelson Mandela endorses the production for illustrating "the universality of ambition, greed and fear". Perhaps. But I would suggest that to an audience unable, or never given the opportunity, to understand the text, what Umabatha illustrates is the irresistible appeal of traditional African rhythm and dance.

Showing off the home-grown talent

PROMS
Andrew Clements

AS FAR as young, living composers are concerned, the Proms make a wonderful showcase. The transition from promising talent to established figure is a difficult one, and getting a platform in the orchestral world is even harder. But the proms habitually spread their bounty wider than the symphony orchestras themselves can afford to, and regularly balance premières from the big names with important, high-profile opportunities for lesser figures.

None is more deserving than 36-year-old David Sawer, who may not have attracted the big headlines so far but is unquestionably one of the major home-grown talents of his generation.

At the Proms last week the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, under Mark Wigglesworth, brought to London Sawer's The Greatest Happiness Principle. The orchestra had given the first performance in Cardiff earlier this year.

Over the past five years, helped undoubtedly by a residency with the Bournemouth Symphony, Sawer has become a hugely accomplished orchestral composer, with a remarkable ear for sonority and a totally fresh approach to form and content.

The Greatest Happiness Principle is a perfect example of Sawer's knack of alighting upon a seemingly quite unmusical concept and turning it into a brilliant formal conceit. The starting point this time was the 18th century humanist Jeremy Bentham and his idea that happiness should be parcelled out into equal portions to every member of society. On to that, Sawer grafted another Benthamite invention, his design for the Panopticon prison, in which the inmates were confined in a series of circular corridors where they could be monitored constantly from the centre.

Out of this unlikely material Sawer has built a clever orchestral allegory of control and social engineering. The musical structure is itself circular, ending as it begins, and passing through 11 sharply contrasted sections until it comes back to the strictly regimented music of the start, though by the final bars the conductor has ceded control to the orchestra; the regime has asserted itself and the players can operate without supervision.

On a more superficial level, though, The Greatest Happiness Principle is just a brilliant old-fashioned overture, a concert opener designed to put an orchestra smartly through its paces and chock full of glittering, fresh musical ideas.

One month on from the handover of Hong Kong, **Andrew Higgins** looks at the future for Chinese directors

Enter the dragon

WHEN the Cannes jury named Wong Kar-wai this year's best director, Hong Kong celebrated with banner headlines and admiring tributes to the former British colony's premier iconoclast. Many Hong Kongers might feel uneasy about homosexual love, the theme of his widely acclaimed Happy Together, but no one in Hong Kong has ever quibbled with success.

No one, that is, except the editors of Wen Wei Po, local arbiter of taste and political correctness for the Chinese Communist Party. The Hong Kong newspaper, funded and controlled by Beijing, entirely ignored Wong's triumph. It did not even mention his name. Instead, readers were asked churlishly: "Why are so many of the films at festivals so full of violence, wickedness and evil?"

Hong Kong's merger with China brought together two cultures that seem not merely distinct but irreconcilable. A month on, we're faced with an unavoidable question: which will prevail?

Any purge of Hong Kong's "violence, wickedness and evil" would find a fleshy target in the Hong Kong film industry, prolific producer of bloodstained kung-fu dramas, soft-porn skinflicks, irreverent art films and the world's worst subtitles ("I please your uterus, you kiss my toes. It's fair," murmurs a lover in Daughters Of Darkness.)

Yet some see opportunity in the handover. Only Hollywood and Bombay make more films than Hong Kong. Add China's own studios and Hong Kong could become the centre of the world's biggest market for, and maker of, movies. Whether China will fortify or cripple Hong Kong movie-making remains to be seen.

Hong Kong's biggest concession to its new landlord has been to stop making films that portray mainlanders as ill-mannered bumpkins. It was a popular genre in the late 1980s and often centred on a fictional character called Ah Chaan, a mainlander who wins a hamburger-eating contest. But the change has less to do with self-censorship than changing fashion. Ah Chaan stopped being funny.

The prospects for Hong Kong film-makers are probably both better and worse than might seem from a distance. Better because Beijing seems in no rush to extend censorship into this nominally autonomous zone. Worse because what in the West appears a cresting creative wave has already crashed.

Just as Asian talent is making it big in the West, with Jackie Chan in Rumble In The Bronx, John Woo directing John Travolta in Broken Arrow and the Chinese actress Gong Li peering from the pages of celebrity magazines, the industry faces crisis at home. In Hong Kong, the problem is economic not political; in China, it is both.

Ideological meddling — known as "spiritual civilisation" — has exacted a catastrophic toll on Chinese cinema. Even the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television recently acknowledged that scores of cinemas were closing because audiences were staying away. The state pumps money into flops such as Kong Fansen, a biography of a martyred model cadre, but starves real talent of funds. Celebrated directors such as Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou make all their films with foreign money. They can film in China but are rarely allowed to screen the result.

Asian films are making it big in the West with the likes of actress Gong Li (right). But the industry is facing a crisis at home

Not only did the Communist Party sit in sullen silence while Hong Kong and the world applauded Wong Kar-wai's success at Cannes, but it also torpedoed the hopes of two Chinese directors — Zhang Yimou, maker of Raise The Red Lantern and Shanghai Triad, and Zhang Yuan, an independent film-maker best known for a gritty production called Beijing Bastards.

The enforced absence of China's premier auteur and a spunky young independent summed up Hong Kong's worst fears — a vindictive cultural bureaucracy more interested in settling scores than making films. The two directors were banned from going to Cannes because festival organisers refused to pull from competition Zhang Yuan's latest production, the gay-themed, French-funded East Palace West Palace. (The title derives from gay slang for public toilets outside the Forbidden City.) "It's hard to explain what this odd word freedom means," says Zhang Yuan, who had his passport confiscated to ensure he could not watch his own film at Cannes, "I'm free here [in Beijing] now, but I can't make films. I'm free, but I can't leave the country. This word freedom is very hard to understand."

Meanwhile China's cultural commissars have celebrated the return of Hong Kong with the country's most expensive film, a $11 million epic about the opium war. It casts Britain as the arch-villain and has gone on general release across China and in Hong Kong. The colony's verdict? Boring. "The result seems like a loud cannon blast that disappears into a cloud of smoke," scoffed Hong Kong Standard film critic Dennis Eng.

As long as the box-office decides which films get made and shown in Hong Kong, however, the territory should manage to escape such stupidity. It will prevent the suffocating bureaucratic double-speak that curses mainland culture and drives its talent abroad. Hong Kong, unlike the party, does not tolerate flops.

Under fire . . . Brigitte Lin in Chungking Express. Beijing has denounced the international film industry as full of "violence, wickedness and evil"

AT THIS year's San Francisco International Film Festival, actress Maggie Cheung spoke of the prevailing mood in Hong Kong. "We're all keeping our fingers crossed," she said. "If censorship gets the way it is in China, it will be a problem because Hong Kong film-makers are used to freedom." Her latest film is The Soong Sisters, made by Mabel Cheung in collaboration with the Beijing Film Studio. Eighteen minutes of it ended up on the censor's cutting-room floor.

Hong Kong's accountants can be as merciless as the commissars. The Hong Kong Motion Pictures Association reports that local films last year made $85 million — nearly half the revenue of 1992. At the same time, imports, mostly Hollywood blockbusters, have doubled their share of the local market to 46 per cent. For Hong Kong cinema a turning point as dramatic in some ways as 1997 was 1993 when Jurassic Park became the first foreign film to head its list of annual box-office hits. Studio bosses responded by slashing budgets. The average film now costs $1.5 million, half what it did five years ago.

"The audience is shrinking. The entire industry is shrinking," says independent film-maker Shu Kei, "Hong Kong films are in trouble, but this has nothing to do with politics." He is less than delighted with his last film Love, Amoeba-style. Is it worth seeing? "Not if you have anything better to do," he says.

Any alliance with China, however, is fraught with peril. Hong Kong thrived as a centre for film-making precisely because it was not part of China. The colonial government was often far less tolerant than it would like to pretend in its dying days, but it did provide a safe haven. Its film industry was enriched by an almost constant flow of talent from across the border. The traumas that destroyed Shanghai as Asia's Hollywood — from the Japanese invasion to Mao Zedong's 1949 revolution and the lunatic political campaigns that followed — made Hong Kong its successor.

Reunification ended what, for Hong Kong, has been a profitable separation. Hong Kong must prosper as a bridge to, not a barrier against, the mainland. But as with most other business, the promise of 1.2 billion cinema-goers has so far proved a mirage. China has a strict system of quotas for foreign films, including Hong Kong productions. The big hits are from Hollywood.

To date, Hong Kong has made few political films. "When you say politics to most Hong Kong producers, they think serious," says Shu Kei. "And serious in Hong Kong means non-commercial. Films here are for entertainment."

The two, though, are not always separate. And it will be this that concerns Beijing. Shu Kei holds the local distribution rights for The Gate Of Heavenly Peace, a three-hour American-made documentary about the 1989 student movement. The documentary ran for five months at a packed art cinema, far exceeding expectations. The video goes on sale soon. "Hong Kong was interested in this film because they were interested in what happened in Beijing in 1989," says Shu Kei. "The student movement means a lot to them. It was more than politics; it was part of their life. They were involved." And perhaps nothing unnerves Beijing like the prospect of Hong Kong getting involved again.

Therapy for the blank generation

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

PULP FICTION wasn't the first film to investigate the comic possibilities of killing. Hollywood has often done that, if rarely with as much flair and sheer cheek as Tarantino. Now comes **Grosse Pointe Blank**, which has as its central character a yuppie professional killer who goes to a psychotherapist to find out why he's bored rather than disgusted with the process. He has no conscience but would, perhaps, quite like to find one.

The therapist (Alan Arkin, in the most cherishable of his recent roles) can't stand the sight of him but is also nervous that if he is over-critical, he'll end up in a pool of blood. This is a comedy that stops just short of farce and tries to make moral points about the blank generation too.

Not for nothing is the young killer's name Martin Q Blank. He's played by John Cusack, who co-produced and co-wrote the film. His cool, slow-burning, slightly nonchalant performance is almost as much of a pleasure as Arkin's.

He is forced by his superiors, whom we never see, to perform the unscheduled assassination of a federal witness in Detroit. The suburb of Grosse Pointe is nearby, where his high school reunion is due to take place. Blank decides he might as well kill two birds with one stone: a girl (Minnie Driver) he stood up at the school prom and would like to see again will be there. Meanwhile, however, the Feds are on his trail and another hit man means to rub him out.

The film is full of well-written little sequences that don't quite make a satisfactory whole, particularly since the last two reels descend into the type of comedy that emphasises action rather than character. But they are so watchable that the film works both on an ironic level and as a comedy thriller.

In particular, the school reunion, which introduces us to salesmen, estate agents, car dealers and the like, is very sharply observed. It proves to the central character that what he's doing isn't much worse than anyone else's occupation.

Idealism has been replaced by sheer greed. Even the hit man's girl — a radio DJ — thinks it will make a good programme if she discusses with her listeners whether she should get back together with him.

This, I'm pretty sure, is what the film is actually about, apart from its potential for slightly off-key entertainment. Perhaps it's Grosse Pointe Blank's failure to punch this home that prevents it winging its way nearer to the top-class quality it's seeking.

What anyone will think of Julio Medem's **Tierra** and Arnaud Desplechin's three-hour **Ma Vie Sexuelle** is anybody's guess. Both are weird but rather wonderful if you can take them at all.

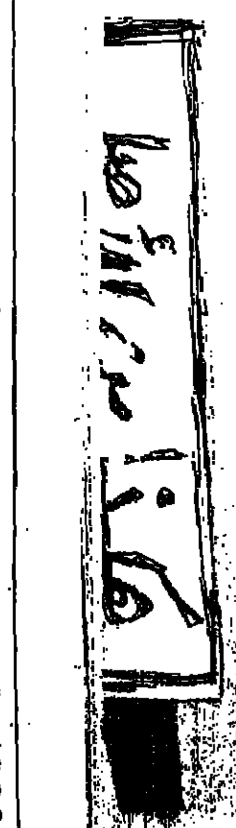
Tierra is Medem's third feature after Cows and The Red Squirrel. It has Carmello Gomez as a strange young man who may or may not be an angel and arrives during a storm in the country to fumigate the vines. The film is deliberately obscure but brilliantly made with erotic intent. It is clearly the work of a highly cinematic film-maker. But where it comes from and where it goes is well beyond me.

There's not much excuse for Ma Vie Sexuelle to last three hours, though it accumulates details about its Parisian characters that eventually make increasing sense.

It is acted with abandon and flair by a cast that includes Mathieu Amalric as a philosophy lecturer whose idealisation of his best friend's fiancée leads him to ignore his own girlfriend.

When a third woman appears on his horizon, he feels he must face up to his responsibilities. But no one in the cast seem to know how to do this, least of all him.

The film is funny, a little horrific, pretentious and observant, often at the same time. But it's a bit of a slog, even though Paris looks more wonderful than it is these days. The word "edit" ought to be stamped on Desplechin's forehead next time round.



Superman's decline

George Steiner

Bernard Shaw
by Michael Holroyd
Chatto & Windus 700pp £25

AT HIS death in 1950, George Bernard Shaw still bestrode the literary-intellectual world like the proverbial colossus. He was, quite simply, the most famous writer, commentator, wit on the planet. His physique, so trenchantly expressive of his caustic sovereignty, his sheer longevity — he was born in 1856 into another, almost lost world — the range of his works and the Babel of tongues into which they had been translated, give to Shaw's pronouncements an immediate international resonance and authority. Literary immortality seemed an obvious bonus.

Erosion followed swiftly on funereal eulogies and encomia. The plays seeped out of the repertoire. The novels, long a minority interest, became increasingly unobtainable. The prodigal volumes of dramatic and musical criticism turned up in Charing Cross Road second-hand book-boxes. The political pamphlets, the whiplash tracts on Wagner and on Ibsen, were no longer cited. For a time, the once-acclaimed prefaces held their own. Then, they too dimmed.

It is, to be sure, an exaggeration, but not altogether an implausible one, to venture that GBS survived in general awareness as the begetter, via Pygmalion, of the triumphant My Fair Lady. Nor is this condition as yet unambiguously resolved. What first-order literary or philosophic critiques have we of Shaw? How many of his plays are being staged? Where is there substantive engagement with his doctrines? This in respect of a public mind and voice which contemporaries bracketed confidently with Victor Hugo and Tolstoy.

The motives for this "subsidence" seem to me, in certain regards, paradoxical. A number of the causes for which GBS fought so vehemently, have prevailed. The rights of women, the understanding of socialism, the vegetarianism, the ridicule of war to which he devoted so much of his rhetorical powers, have either become conventions of good sense or have modulated into a different register.

But what may matter more is that Shaw's enlistment of fiction and drama in the service of polemical rationality, or "pragmatic utopia", has become near to unacceptable in our own climate of sensibility. There is scarcely a word or sentence in GBS's vast output which is not, in the very best sense, advocacy and propaganda. We prefer our creeds to be inward, problematic, obliquely metaphoric. Shaw's combative trust in the ultimate realisation of truth, of robust decency, of clearly definable ideals, strikes us as both shallow and hectoring.

At his finest, Shaw handles English prose as did Swift and Hazlitt before him. A crisp light shines even through his ironies and anger. Yet it is just this sinewy, linear style that current critical-academic taste, with its investment in obscurity and convolution, distrusts.

Published between 1988 and 1992, Michael Holroyd's biography of Shaw ran to four ample tomes. It passed into the twilight of its subject. It has now been re-issued in a one-volume version. I have not compared the two texts, but gain the impression that this edition had profited from abbreviation. It still seems bulky, but reads fluently.

HOLROYD rightly insists on the fascination and self-educative energies of Shaw's early years. Today unread, the novels made for invaluable training in social comedy, dialogue and the setting of crucial scenes. Shaw's music journalism, which began in 1888, the Bayreuth experience of 1889, the polemic brilliance of the public speaker and pamphleteer were to be directly reflected in the theatrical debut: Widower's House (1892) and Mrs Warren's Profession (1893). It is the mark of mastery to incorporate and then transmute its precedent. Shaw achieved this dynamic with regard to Ibsen and Chekhov. But it may well have been Wagner (The Perfect Wagnerite, 1899) who proved most formative.

Shaw's major plays seem to derive from the Wagnerian dramaturgy of ideas and ideology; the leviathan scale of Man And Superman, or Back To Methuselah look to the Wagnerian model of controlled immensity. Above all, there is a radically Wagnerian strategy in Shaw's resort to the lengthy prefaces, programmatic and didactic essays which surround the plays.



Bernard Shaw: lost from the intellectual mainstream

Holroyd deals admirably with both the social-theatrical and the more private background, though privacy was not GBS's forte. Shaw's relations to actors, actresses, managers, theatrical impresarios and the whole mendacious magic of the playhouse were no less intimate and formative than Wagner's.

Shaw's marriage in June 1898 may have brought stability, but it never arrested the "philandering" — Shaw's own term — that brought him into more or less intimate complicity with some of the most vivid women of the age. There is autobiographical merriment in Caesar And Cleopatra as there is in that misshapen but persistently intriguing epilogue, The Apple Cart. It is to the "epilogue years" that Holroyd turns most acutely. Aged 80 in 1936, adulated at the Malvern Festival, Shaw pronounced: "I am only one of Ibsen's ghosts."

Can one guess as to the future? My hunch is that the narrative-critical reviews of musical and theatrical performance will re-emerge. They are often incomparable and fully transcend their occasion. Is there a finer writer of high comedy after Congreve, and together with Wilde, than the author of Androcles And The Lion, Arms And The Man, Candida or Pygmalion? It is hard to believe that Heartbreak House, difficult as it is to produce convincingly, will not return to the theatre.

And there is, of course, Saint Joan, from its initial stirrings in 1913 to its composition a decade later. For all its longueurs and dissonances of register, this is surely one of the enduring masterpieces of English drama.

When GBS rejoins the intellectual mainstream, Holroyd's loyal, illuminating labours will be there to salute him.

Thrillers

Chris Petit

Rogue Element, by Terence Strong (Heinemann, £10)

A FORMER MI5 agent in Northern Ireland finds himself unceremoniously framed by ruthless ex-employers for murdering an IRA man. In part a well-oiled and efficient courtroom thriller, in part an attack on the secret state and its unaccountable ways and mazes, this book offers an authoritative sense of inside dope, set against a background of international pressure.

The Amethysts, by Frank Delaney (HarperCollins, £16.99)

WRITING quality, gift-of-the-gab prose, broadcaster Delaney effortlessly hooks the reader with his tale of an architect mourning his gruesomely murdered lover in Switzerland and encountering a decadent European couple who appear to possess an item stolen from the dead woman. This mix of John Fowles and Ian McEwan turns flammable when the architect is torched in London. Things become wintry and grown-up where they could have faltered into tosh.

The Art of Breaking Glass, by Matthew Hall (Orion, £9.99)

THIS smart thriller is hard to fault. But for all the fancy writing and readability, it flirts with more than it delivers, and increasingly has the predestined air of a screenplay. Charismatic nut and explosives-cum-computer wizard befriends a psychiatric nurse, his mission to hurt the bad people for the common good. This is Robin Hood with a psychotic edge.

Latitude Zero, by Windsor Charlton (Orion, £16.99)

CASTAWAYS on a desert island revert to primitive type in an eco-conscious reworking of Lord Of The Flies, with plenty of childish behaviour from an adult assortment that includes a rock star, a supermodel and a journalist. Dumbing down Golding and giving him the Cluedo treatment may not be everyone's idea of a good read, but the formula withstands more or less any assault.

The Profiler, by Harry Asher (Vista, £5.99)

EUROPOL, Europe's FBI, encounters plenty of national bloody-mindedness in its hunt for those responsible for the hacking up of several bodies. A female profiler, carrying extra sub-plot baggage, unravels a Fu Manchuish conspiracy that, to its detriment, lacks its Fu Manchu. Intriguing premise, lots of chauvinism, xenophobia, too much office politics and in the end insufficient closure.

Bringing moral order back to society

Anthony Giddens

The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society
by Amitai Etzioni
Profile Books 314pp £12.99pbk

ABOUT a century ago, one of the founding fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim, set out his reflections on the rise of individualism. His aim was to find a way between two quite contrasting interpretations of social order.

One body of thought held that "there is no such thing as society", only individuals. Social cohesion comes about spontaneously through the interaction of individuals in markets; the best thing government can do is to confine itself to upholding the rule of law and provide for defence. But the conservatives believed that an excess of individualism was threatening the very fabric of the family and nation.

Durkheim rejected each of these positions. Modern societies, which are highly diverse, can exist only if individual autonomy, and the needs of social communities, exist in some kind of balance. The acceptance of moral responsibility towards the community is the condition of individual freedom.

Nowadays Durkheim would be called a communitarian. Although Etzioni barely refers to Durkheim, there is an eerie similarity between the debate about individualism going on today and that of 100 years ago. Etzioni wants to do a Durkheim for our times. He is a regular visitor to the White House and his ideas have influenced Tony Blair and other European politicians.

The communitarian debate today has become far more sophisticated, a profound rethinking of the nature of moral values. Etzioni's work, which is policy-orientated, goes to a level of detail beyond that of his illustrious predecessor, Charles Taylor. And whereas Durkheim saw himself as producing a version of socialism, Etzioni's programme responds to a world where socialism and Marxism are dead.

Etzioni's starting point is that the expansion of rights does not always produce greater freedoms. The good society is one where individual autonomy stems from, and also contributes to, the moral continuity of society: this balance is the "golden rule". For instance: in the United States, some civil libertarians are opposed to the compulsory wearing of seat belts. The communitarian recognises that enforcing the use of seat belts actually serves as a basis of liberty, because it contributes to the sustaining of life and the maintaining of order on the roads.

IN THE United States, and in other Western societies, Etzioni says, too many rights have been accumulated. Conservatives, he argues, are right to worry about a decline in morality. The years from the early 1960s to the 1990s have been marked by an increasing sense of entitlement and an inclination to shed social responsibilities.

Durkheim famously described what he saw as the moral decay of his time as "anomie" — lack of accepted moral standards. According to Etzioni, anomie is a marked feature of present-day American society. Respect for authority has declined, the institution of marriage has weakened, and there is widespread disaffection with government. There is too much autonomy and not enough order. But Etzioni's remedy is not a rightwing one. Communitarians look for the re-creation of moral order on the basis of open, consensual participation.

I am not persuaded either by Etzioni's diagnosis of our social ills or by his prognosis. The book does not separate the influence of market forces from the accumulation of rights: the first could be said to provide much more of a problem for the maintenance of social solidarity.

Etzioni has a small section about globalisation, but does not set his discussion overall in the context of these transformative global changes. He wants "society" to recover its moral order. "Society" here still seems to mean the nation. Yet the nation state is plainly in transition. It is unlikely to become again the source of cohesion that it once was.

Time for chintz and tonic

Roy Porter

Restoration London
by Liza Picard
Weidenfeld & Nicolson 338pp £20

BOOKS on the Restoration run to a formula: Charles II returns in triumph and then chapters follow on the glamour of his court, his mistresses and cavaliers, the gloom of the Plague and the Fire, and the political guile of a Merrie Monarch who was convinced God would not punish a man for indulging in a few pleasures, but determined he would never be forced to go on his travels again.

Most of that is present in Liza Picard's charming book — but it's relegated to the background. Stage centre is what is usually left unstated, the routine life of Londoners at large, a chronicle of everyday things which focuses on "practical details" — what people ate and drank and how much it cost, how washing-day was organised, how you removed candle-grease stains, and a thousand other minutiae.

She's assembled the book in three parts. The first takes in the physical environment — London's townscape before and after the Fire, its buildings, interiors, gardens and getting around (traffic jams were so bad that Samuel Pepys frequently alighted from his hackney coach and walked).

Picard then moves on to the business of living — clothes, hair, jewellery, housework, laundry and shopping, diseases and dentistry (false teeth were made of hippo tusk). The first wallpaper shops appeared, as well as new fabrics like chintz — Pepys misheard and called it "Chinke". And the last part turns to the social round, to pastimes, marriage and divorce and the social system. What comes across loud and clear is that the Restoration brought not only a new consumer capitalism but an unabashed pride in it all. One day Pepys sallied out with his wife Elizabeth in his new yellow-varnished coach:

"With our new liveries of serge (for the coachman) and the horses' manes and tails tied with red ribbon and the standards thus gilt with varnish and all clean, and green raynes, that people did mightily look upon us; and the truth is, that I did not see any coach more pretty or more gay than ours all the day."

A retired lawyer dipping her toe into history, Liza Picard puts her faith in the black-letter evidence, delving into original sources which range from contemporary diaries to the Statutes of the Realm. Her diggings strike many gleaming nuggets. In those days before fly paper and aerosols, how did you keep flies out of the kitchen? You put aromatic herbs on the window-sill and laid blue paper on your shelves (flies, everyone knew, disliked the colour blue). Likewise, I was intrigued to learn that shoes in those days were "straight" rather than left-and-right footed; that the most fashionable false eyebrows were made of mouse skin; and that Charles II dined in public several days a week (sometimes onlookers snatched the food off his table).

I was particularly struck by the section on Londoners' language. We all know that spelling was less standardised in those days and that women in particular wrote as they spoke. Thus Lady Hobart ordered "hunicuckells" for her garden and warned about one acquaintance that "she gros very malisas in hur toung to us all". But how exactly did they speak? Picard's grubbing around in elocution books shows how much vowels have migrated, and reveals what might seem to us a surprising agreement between *bon ton* and *hoi polloi* speech: both might say (for instance) that they "had hard that sarvants could not larn to make tay"; and "leisure" was pronounced in what we would hear to be the American way.

Picard's inquisitive quarrying thus strikes many a rich vein, but her book is less sure-footed when it steps back to survey wider issues. Take sex. Noting that marriage came late in those days (women tended not to wed till their mid-20s, and men later still) yet the bastardy rate was low, she concludes that "sexual intercourse . . . before marriage is quickly disposed of: there was, practically speaking, none".

This hardly squares with what her book itself tells us about the City's thousands of "hoors". Recent scholars have argued, on the contrary, that there was a great deal of premarital sexual activity going on, with the implicit assumption that in the event of pregnancy marriage would follow. Not chastity, but different habits of sexuality were the order of the day.

Elsewhere, once off home turf, the book can also be unreliable. We are informed on the very first page that, London aside, only Bristol and Norwich had populations greater than 1,000 in 1660: tell that to the citizens of York or Exeter! Elsewhere we read that the Jarrow hunger march took place in the 1920s (actually 1936). And someone should have spotted that Hannah Woolley, that fascinating precursor to Mrs Beeton, is misspelt throughout.

Restoration London resembles a lucky dip, and Picard encourages the reader to take it in small doses — no bad idea, since if you read it straight through you notice irritating repetitions which more alert editing would have caught. And an opportunity has been missed with the illustrations. These are all bunched together in three blocks, whereas this is a book absolutely crying out for a contemporary drawing or woodcut on every spread, bringing to life the unusual objects being discussed — strange foods and fashions, such as men's risqué petticoat breeches ("all open, like a short petticoat, having no sewing up between the legs").

All the same, this is a joy of a book. It's style is both simple and evocative — in mourning, we are told, "wealth could be gauged by the width of the black ripples spreading outwards from a death in the family". And it radiates throughout that quality so essential in a good historian: infinite curiosity.

Stripping off the genes

Nicholas Lezard

Why Is Sex Fun?
by Jared Diamond
Weidenfeld 168pp £11.99

TO WHICH the first answer could be: Is it? I remember one bookshop which put The Joy Of Sex in its fiction section. This is not just a joke. It illustrates that there are parts of human behaviour — perverse, counter-productive — that sociobiology finds hard to explain. Not that it might never explain the weirdest regions of human behaviour. To take one of the less weird — homosexuality: "There is, I wish to suggest, a strong possibility that homosexuality is normal in a biological sense, that it is a distinctive beneficent behaviour that evolved as an important element of early human organisation." Thus Edward O Wilson, founding father of sociobiology, in 1978. Nineteen years later, in a book all about the notional hedonics of sex, Diamond does not find the subject worth a mention.

What he does tackle are such problems as why, of all male mammals, only the Dyak fruit bat lactates, or why, when compared with our nearest relatives, the great apes, human female ovulation is concealed, why we are largely monogamous, why women undergo the menopause, and why men are so generously endowed Down There.

Even gorillas, who could literally tear us to pieces without breaking into a sweat, can only manage members one-and-a-half inches long. Diamond suggests that our own members are the result of runaway selection, like the peacock's tail, and that "it is large enough that if the same quantity of tissue were instead devoted to extra cerebral cortex, that brainy redesigned man would gain a big advantage."



Fun for the supple: Khajurhao temple sculpture PHOTOGRAPH: RAGHU RAI

I suspect that most men, faced with a brain/knob trade-off, would happily forsake a few IQ points for an extra inch or two. As for the male member as an example of runaway selection — well, it doesn't feel like it. An elephant's clitoris is six inches long. Bully for her, but so what?

There are grounds for unease which go beyond any of the rights or wrongs of Diamond's conclusions. We are going evolution-crazy. We have latched on to this explanation for every aspect of our behaviour with an avidity that even scientists should find unnerving.

When we are told that men want to spread their genes around as much as possible, or that women are on the prowl for the best genetic material, or that we are a survival strategy adopted by our genes, we take it on the nod; but there is something about the language used that makes me think we are witnessing a new version of the pathetic fallacy, the attribution of human emotions to animals; only we are now anthropomorphising molecules. This might be good science but it makes bad philosophy, not least in the way that it absolves us of responsibility for our more ignoble impulses. More worryingly, it is creating a new mythology with which to grasp the world; and even if sociobiology is ultimately "right", the popular understanding of it is wrong. As Professor Steve Jones pointed out recently, "Evolution is to allegory as statues are to birdshit: a convenient platform upon which to deposit badly digested ideas."

There isn't anything badly digested about Diamond's fascinating and readable book, nor that we should take his conclusions with a pinch of salt. We should, though, monitor our responses to it carefully, our readiness to concur. Perhaps it is evolutionarily advantageous for us so to do.

Grace notes of cricket

Simon Rae

The History of Cricket from the Weald to the World
by Peter Wynne-Thomas
The Stationery Office 268pp £25

CRICKET has a long and chequered history, though perhaps not as long as previously thought. The game started in the 16th century in the Weald, which Wynne-Thomas points out was then densely forested. The local economy was based on iron, and cricket's founding fathers were foundry workers.

For the man in the Mound Stand, cricket history probably starts rather later with Hambledon, but in a sport run by an aristocratic fast set there was a good deal of betting, brawling, and match-fixing before the famous Hampshire club enjoyed its glorious heyday. For two decades from 1771, it was undoubtedly the country's best cricket club.

The story of White Conduit Fields, the formation of the Marylebone Cricket Club and Thomas Lord's three cricket grounds had no chronicler, so the picture is less clear. Wynne-Thomas suggests that the MCC may in fact have been founded "in or before 1744", 43 years earlier than the official date, 1787.

The post-Hambledon period witnessed many champion cricketers like Fuller Pilch and Alfred Mynn, but the towering figure of the 19th century is, of course, the Champion himself, W G Grace, who burst on to the scene in the 1860s with the impact of a sporting superstar such as Tiger Woods. In fact, with rather more impact, as he stood alone.

Bradman, the "Uncrowned King of Australia", achieved a similar status in the 20th century. It's difficult to compare these two giants, but Bradman's sheer consistency probably places him higher than Grace as a batsman. Grace, however, had a greater influence on the game. He raised the science of batting to an undreamt-of level of excellence, and laid the basis of modern cricket by setting new standards. Men such as Ranji, Trumper, Hobbs, Hammond and Bradman himself, built on this foundation. Bradman's genius engendered Bodyline, which turned the cricket world upside down, but did not fundamentally change the game. After the anger subsided, Don's unstoppable stream of runs continued flowing into the record books.

Wynne-Thomas also offers a magisterial survey of cricket's growth and development around the world, from China to Peru. He also covers women's cricket, wartime cricket, league and club cricket, and the game's finances and politics. The rise of nations as diverse as India, New Zealand, the West Indies and, most recently, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, to cricketing maturity and Test-match status makes fascinating reading.

What they all share, of course, is a common background. However eagerly they threw off colonialism, all remained faithful to the great imperial game. But the connection between Britain's domination and cricket's expansion can be overstressed. Wynne-Thomas's predecessor, Rowland Bowan, who wrote his history in 1970, thought cricket's decline "as inevitable" as that of the British Empire. Kerry Packer, sponsorship, Sky and the huge success of the World Cup have instead turned cricket into a truly global sport, ready to bounce into the new millennium with all the brio of a Shane Warne top-spinner zipping through an English batsman's gate. As Wynne-Thomas says in the last line of his excellent book: "No longer will (cricket's) enjoyment be confined to the heirs of the British Empire."

Athletics World Championships

British dreams end in silver

Duncan Mackay in Athens

THE championships which had promised so much ended in the Olympic Stadium here last Sunday night with Britain failing to win a gold medal for the first time in the event's 14-year history. The men's 4 x 400 metres relay team, carrying the last hopes of a victory so sorely needed after the disappointments of Atlanta last summer, could only join Denise Lewis (heptathlon), Steve Backley, Colin Jackson and Jonathan Edwards as silver-medal winners.

"We were very unlucky just as we were in Atlanta last year," said the team captain Roger Black who, with Iwan Thomas, Jamie Baulch and Mark Richardson formed the 400m relay team. "There has to come a time when you stop using that as an excuse, but I did feel desperately sorry for Kelly Holmes and Jonathan Edwards because they have each been so unlucky with injuries this summer."

It was doubly disappointing since the United States 4 x 400 squad had been weakened by the withdrawals of their world and Olympic champion Michael Johnson, and world record-holder Butch Reynolds.

However, there was a welcome surprise for Britain when the 4 x 100 metres squad won bronze medals. Bereft of Linford Christie, who announced that he had run his last race, they were third in 38.14sec behind Donovan Bailey's Canadians, first in 37.86, and Nigeria.

They earned their medals with some slick baton-changing not normally associated with British teams and a storming last leg from Julian Golding, who rounded off an inspired run with a dip finish to pip the Cubans.

The British team took a lap of honour which seemed to fall a little flat without the gold medals, whereas the sprint-relay team of Darren Braithwaite, Darren Campbell, Doug Walker and Golding were ecstatic after their unexpected bronze.

At first it was not clear whether they had won a medal as the television replay on the giant screen was inconclusive. When the result was flashed up on the scoreboard a few minutes later the youngsters hugged one another with pride and pleasure at the prospect of winning $30,000. The way is now clear for one of them to succeed Christie as the British No 1.

Earlier Backley's attempt to become the first British male javelin thrower to win a world title ended in courageous failure again. The 28-year-old had desperately sought to add a world title to his two European and two Commonwealth gold medals and three world records.

It was not to be. Backley was condemned to another silver medal to go with the ones he collected at the 1995 world championships in Gothenburg and the Olympics in Atlanta last year.

Jackson, the 30-year-old Cardiff runner dismissed as yesterday's man, proved the Welsh dragon still has plenty of fire in his belly when he finished second in the 110m hurdles behind Allen Johnson of the US, who peaked in the final.

The American Olympic gold medallist ran 12.93sec, the fifth best performance of all time and only 0.02sec outside Jackon's world record, to hold off his resurgent rival. The Briton's 13.05sec was his fastest for three years.

The Greek gods did not smile on vicar's son Edwards as he finished second in the triple jump to take Britain's fourth silver. The 31-year-old Gateshead Harrier, who lit up Gothenburg two years ago by twice breaking the world record, had promised a do-or-die effort. He was as good as his word but it was not enough.

"I'm so gutted," he said. "My heel was fine. It didn't stop me jumping. If I knew what I was doing differently to 1995 I would put it right."

Meanwhile Sally Gunnell has reached her final hurdle and Tessa Sanderson thrown her last javelin. Britain's only two female Olympic champions of the last quarter-century both announced their retirement.

The injury to Gunnell's left calf, which forced her to pull out of the semi-final of the 400m hurdles pushed the British team captain into making a decision she had hoped to delay until the end of the season.

The 41-year-old Sanderson was always expected to hang up her javelin after these championships. Sadly she could not conjure up one last great performance and failed even to make the finals.

Delays in handing out promised National Lottery money were blamed by the chief coach Malcolm Arnold for Britain's poor showing in the championships.

The sport is still waiting to see the $4 million it was awarded by the UK Sports Council in May, in the wake of the inquest that followed the country's failure to win a gold medal in the Atlanta Olympics 12 months ago.

"Plans are there for a co-ordinated team approach but we still don't have the resources," said Arnold. "I've been on zero budget since October 1, 1996, to the point where I'm totally fed up."

So close . . . but it's another consolation prize for Great Britain as Tyree Washington (right) of the US comes home in front of Mark Richardson (centre) in the men's 4x400 metres relay final PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE BRUNSKILL

Final medals table

	G	S	B	Total
United States	7	4	8	18
Germany	5	1	4	10
Cuba	4	1	1	6
Kenya	3	2	2	7
Ukraine	2	4	1	7
Morocco	2	1	1	4
Czech Republic	2	0	0	2
Norway	2	0	0	2
Russia	1	4	3	8
Spain	1	3	1	5
Portugal	1	2	1	4
Australia	1	1	2	4
Italy	1	1	1	3
Romania	1	1	1	3
Canada	1	1	0	2
Poland	1	1	0	2
South Africa	1	1	0	2
France	1	0	1	2
Japan	1	0	1	2
Mexico	1	0	1	2
Denmark	1	0	0	1
Ethiopia	1	0	0	1
New Zealand	1	0	0	1
Sweden	1	0	0	1
Trinidad	1	0	0	1
Great Britain	0	5	1	6
Jamaica	0	3	4	7
Belarus	0	2	2	4
Greece	0	1	1	2
Lithuania	0	1	1	2
Bulgaria	0	1	0	1
Finland	0	1	0	1
Namibia	0	1	0	1
Nigeria	0	1	0	1
Sri Lanka	0	1	0	1
Uganda	0	1	0	1
Bahamas	0	0	1	1
Brazil	0	0	1	1
Mozambique	0	0	1	1
Slovakia	0	0	1	1
Switzerland	0	0	1	1

Football Premiership

Bolton draw first blood

Jeremy Alexander

SOME things never change at The Dell: the hole in the press-box roof and the hole in the home defence, the lick of paint off the field and lack of gloss on it. There was a lack of Matt, too, but the injured Le Tissier is still there. By October, when he returns, Southampton may be ready for a saviour. The relegation struggle is on after the 1-0 defeat inflicted by newly promoted Bolton.

Other things do change, frequently. Dave Jones is the fourth manager in four years. Fresh from taking Stockport from Second to First Division, he admits he "may not be the finished article". His team look an indefinite article. Without the newcomers — Paul Jones and Lee Todd from Stockport, and winger Andy Williams — the loss of three home points might have been a total loss of heart.

Williams, balanced and confident, did on the left what Terry Paine did for years on the right: trick defenders and squeeze over centres from the byline. He has 712 games to go and crossing precision to learn. Todd supported him well and centred better. Most of all, Jones made four one-on-one saves that told a familiar tale about Southampton's central defence.

The goal came in the same way, Scott Sellars slipping Nathan Blake clear beyond the appealing Ken Monkou. "We were doing well until a stupid mistake," said Jones the manager, echoing the refrain of Graeme Souness. It was a mistake that the interval, just afterwards, did not eliminate so much as multiply.

Colin Todd, Bolton's manager, was undismayed by Blake's one-in-five conversion rate, pleased at the chances created. His greatest encouragement will have come from his side's resilience. Two seasons ago they scored enough but conceded too many.

When Southampton attacked in force at the end, albeit without much wit, Gudni Bergsson and Gerry Taggart got something in the way, the full-backs Neil Cox and Robbie Elliott held the defensive shape, the midfield tucked back in support and Keith Branagan had no save to make. The side's survival spirit seems founded this time on greater resolution and better organisation. And, thanks to Scott Sellars and Alan Thompson, the chances are coming.

If only Southampton could say the same. "People have already written us off," said Jones. "It's up to us to prove the experts wrong."

Crystal Palace were another side new to the Premiership celebrating success on the opening day of the English football season. They beat Everton 2-1 at Goodison Park.

But Barnsley, the third team to make their Premiership debut, went down 1-2 at home to West Ham United.

Football results, page 32

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Soccer stars are cleared

FOOTBALLERS Bruce Grobbelaar, John Fashanu and Hans Segers were acquitted in the match-fixing re-trial at Winchester Crown Court. The Malaysian businessman Heng Suan Lim, alleged to be a middleman between the players and Far Eastern gamblers, was also acquitted.

Former Liverpool keeper Grobbelaar was also formally discharged after the jury failed to reach a verdict on a second charge that he corruptly accepted $3,200 to throw games. But the three footballers, whose investigation and two trials lasted more than two and a half years, face a legal bill estimated at more than $1 million

And Grobbelaar could still be banned from the game as the Football Association, which is conducting its own inquiry into possible breaches of its rules, said two charges against him had not been dropped.

AMATEUR golfers from Great Britain and Ireland were beaten in the Walker Cup in New York, bringing their tally to Played 36, Won 4. The 18-6 margin was the worst since they lost 19-5 at Interlachen, Minnesota, in 1993. The match was effectively lost when the the United States won the first foursomes series 4-0. The visitors also lost the second series, and only a win by Justin Rose, at 17 years and 10 days the youngest player to start a Walker Cup match, and Gary Wolstenholme prevented the entire match being over by lunch on the second day.

SRI LANKAN batsmen broke England's record for the highest innings in Test cricket when they reached 952 for six as the match with India ended in a draw in Colombo. England made 903 for seven declared against Australia at The Oval 59 years ago.

Sanath Jayasuriya earlier failed to reach Brian Lara's individual highest Test score of 375, for West Indies against England less than five years ago. The hero of Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup-winning campaign fell just 35 runs short of the target, with 340. Roshan Mahanama made 225 as he helped Jayasuriya put on a world record stand of 576 for any Test wicket.

CHELSEA further strengthened their championship credentials with the signing of Graeme Le Saux for a club record $8 million from Blackburn Rovers. Also saying goodbye to Ewood Park was the Norwegian international defender Henning Berg, who moved to champions Manchester United for a similar sum.

JAN ULLRICH, who won the Tour de France three weeks ago, has withdrawn from the Tour of Spain, the World Championships and this season's remaining World Cup races because of exhaustion.

Cricket Fifth Test: England v Australia

England's Ashes hopes laid to rest

Mike Selvey at Trent Bridge

ALL the optimism of early summer, all the confidence and spirit that came from victories in the one-day internationals and the first Test, disappeared into the Nottingham air like so much candyfloss. England may have been outplayed overall in this Test but for much of it they had competed on a reasonably level playing field. Last Sunday, though, was a day too far.

When Mark Waugh plucked out the catch that put the seal on the match and the series, it put the punctuation on a set of performances that had put English pretences firmly in their place. Make no mistake, this was one of England's worst cricket days of the summer.

The performances of all the England players will now come under scrutiny, with one Test remaining and a Caribbean tour in the offing. So, too, will Mike Atherton's status as captain.

England had been bowled out for 186 in one delivery less than 49 overs; not by Shane Warne's mastery of the arts of spin, although he did pick up three late wickets, but by the pace of Glenn McGrath, Paul Reiffel and, in particular, Jason Gillespie, the Man of the Match from Headingley.

Here the three top-order English batsmen succumbed in 20 balls in the middle of an eight-over spell from Gillespie that cost 65 runs, figures that would be considered expensive in a Sunday slog.

England had no realistic chance of achieving the 451 runs for victory but a draw would have left them with the opportunity of levelling the series at The Oval, where they have a good record of success. With thunder in the air and storms forecast for today, anything might have happened. Instead they never gave themselves a chance.

The destruction began after Atherton and Alec Stewart had scored 25 for the first wicket. With tea imminent, McGrath concocted a delivery that spat from nowhere at Atherton's throat, flicking a glove on the way to Healy. Immediately after the interval Stewart, who had just kept wicket for the best part of 100 overs, edged to Steve Waugh in the gully and the head had been knocked off the innings.

Now it was Gillespie's turn. After his success in Leeds he failed to bowl with any rhythm, reverting to a length too short for comfort. So, despite the precarious situation, Nasser Hussain and John Crawley began to take advantage, adding 53 for the third wicket before Hussain dragged a drive on to his stumps.

In the circumstances it was unforgivable cricket, compounded two overs later when Crawley flicked at Gillespie and for the second time in the match was caught down the leg side. Adam Hollioake was then leg-before to complete Gillespie's disbelief.

In the meantime, however, while Warne spun away from one end, Thorpe had been scything away at Gillespie like the last buccaneer on a pirate ship under siege, reaching his second fifty of the match from 41 balls.

But no one could stay with him. Ben Hollioake was an age getting off the mark and then padded up to a leg-break that would have hit middle: Robert Croft smacked Warne for six and then smeared the next ball to mid-on; and, with the normal close approaching, Caddick was leg-before to a flipper. It gave Australia the breathing space to finish the game.

Yet England had begun the day with optimism, believing that, if they took advantage of the misty morning conditions, as they had on the second day, and bowled Australia out, then the game could be won. The second ball of the day, a snorter with which Caddick removed Steve Waugh, proved a false dawn. Healy arrived and turned the game on its head with 63 from 78 balls. With Ponting, Reiffel and Warne chipping in, the game was taken beyond England's reach.

Australia finished the first day of a match they needed only to draw to retain the Ashes on 302 for three – Matthew Elliott, captain Mark Taylor, Greg Blewett and Mark Waugh all passing half-centuries. But the second morning rang to the sound of wickets tumbling, and the Australian innings closed on 427. At stumps England had made 188 for 4, with a fine knock of 87 from Alec Stewart. The match at that stage looked evenly poised.

The balance, however, quickly changed on Saturday when, apart from Graham Thorpe and Adam Hollioake, England's resistance crumbled and they were bowled out for 313.

Starting the second innings with 114 runs in credit, the tourists were given an ideal start by Taylor (45), Elliott (37) and Blewett (60) who made the England attack look ragged.



A not-so-fond farewell: Australians celebrate as Thorpe falls victim to Warne PHOTOGRAPH: BARRY BATCHELOR

Scoreboard

AUSTRALIA
First Innings

M T G Elliott c Stewart b Headley	69
M A Taylor b Caddick	76
G S Blewett c Stewart b B C Hollioake	50
M E Waugh lbw b Caddick	68
S R Waugh b Malcolm	75
R T Ponting b Headley	9
I A Healy c A J Hollioake b Malcolm	16
S K Warne c Thorpe b Malcolm	0
P R Reiffel c Thorpe b Headley	26
J N Gillespie not out	18
G D McGrath b Headley	1
Extras (b4, lb10, w1, nb4)	19
Total (121.5 overs)	427

Fall: 117, 160, 225, 311, 325, 355, 363, 386, 419.
Bowling: Malcolm 25-4-100-3, Headley 30.5-7-87-4; Caddick 30-4-102-2, B C Hollioake 10-1-57-1; Croft 19-7-43-0; A J Hollioake 7-0-24-0.

ENGLAND
First Innings

M A Atherton c Healy b Warne	27
A J Stewart c Healy b Warne	87
J P Crawley c Healy b McGrath	18
N Hussain b Warne	2
G P Thorpe c Blewett b Warne	53
A J Hollioake c Taylor b Reiffel	45
B C Hollioake c M E Waugh b Reiffel	28
R D B Croft c Blewett b McGrath	18
A R Caddick c Healy b McGrath	0
D W Headley not out	10
D E Malcolm b McGrath	12
Extras (b2, lb6, nb5)	13
Total (93.5 overs)	313

Fall: 106, 129, 135, 141, 243, 243, 272, 290, 290.
Bowling: McGrath 29.5-9-71-4; Reiffel 21-2-101-2; Gillespie 11-3-47-0, Warne 32-8-86-4

AUSTRALIA
Second Innings

M Taylor c Hussain b B Hollioake	45
M T G Elliott c Crawley b Caddick	37
G S Blewett c Stewart b Caddick	60
M E Waugh lbw b Headley	7
S R Waugh c A J Hollioake b Caddick	14
R T Ponting c Stewart b A J Hollioake	45
I A Healy c Stewart b A J Hollioake	63
S K Warne c Thorpe b Croft	20
P R Reiffel c B C Hollioake b Croft	22
J N Gillespie c Thorpe b Headley	4
G D McGrath not out	1
Extras (b1, lb11, nb6)	19
Total (98.5 overs)	336

Fall: 51, 105, 134, 150, 171, 276, 292, 314, 326
Bowling: Malcolm [illegible]; Headley [illegible] 56-2; Croft 36.5-6-74-2; Caddick [illegible] 85-3; B C Hollioake [illegible]-1; A J Hollioake 12-2-31-2.

ENGLAND
Second Innings

M A Atherton c Healy b McGrath	8
A J Stewart c S R Waugh b Reiffel	16
J P Crawley c Healy b Gillespie	33
N Hussain b Gillespie	21
G P Thorpe not out	82
A J Hollioake lbw b Gillespie	2
B C Hollioake lbw b Warne	2
R D B Croft c McGrath b Warne	6
A R Caddick lbw b Warne	0
D W Headley c Healy b McGrath	4
D E Malcolm c M E Waugh b McGrath	0
Extras (b6, lb2, nb4)	12
Total (48.5 overs)	186

Fall: 25, 25, 78, 99, 121, 144, 150, 166, 186.
Bowling: McGrath 13.5-4-36-3; Reiffel 11-3-34-1; Gillespie 8-0-65-3; Warne 16-4-43-3.

Umpires: D R Shepherd and C J Mitchley.

Australia won by 264 runs

It's all change but the real revolution will have to wait

Mike Selvey on cricket's blueprint for the future

RAISING The Standard is what Lord MacLaurin has called his blueprint for the future structure of English cricket. It was presented to the county chairmen at Lord's last week and, according to his lordship, was received as well as he hoped it would be.

But MacLaurin, chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, came close to admitting that his plan for the first-class game was not as revolutionary as he might have liked.

The blueprint, conceived after consultation at all levels of the game, was, he said, "the best possible plan we could put to the counties". In other words, it was a plan he believed the counties would accept when they deliver their verdict at the full ECB board meeting on September 15.

But, asked if this was as far as he could take things, MacLaurin replied mysteriously: "Life is a progression and this is not the limit of our plans." The more revolutionary ideas, such as a divisional county championship, have been shelved, it seems, but not rejected out of hand or beyond recall. Like the good salesman he is, MacLaurin has ensured that first he has a foot in the door.

The plan, he said, was for a framework in which cricketers at every level performed to their maximum potential to achieve the best possible results. He envisaged a "virtual circle of success", where the game was improved, leading to the best possible standards, results (with the national team the priority) and entertainment.

This in turn would maximise media interest and, from that, revenue to develop facilities, and to reinvest in and continually improve the game. But he warned that the competence of players, coaches, managers and administrators was at least as important as the framework.

The proposals are radical in some areas — most notably below the first-class game where a complete restructuring of recreational cricket is mooted — but at the top level domestically they remain the compromise.

In will come, from next season, the predicted three-conference County Championship with its play-offs and attendant complexities (including the notion that a side will win the title without playing five of the 18 counties at any stage). From 1999 there will be a two-divisional, one-day competition, with promotion and relegation, to supersede the Benson & Hedges Cup and Sunday League. The NatWest Trophy, reduced from 60 to 50 overs, will become cricket's FA Cup with 60 competing teams.

The increased ratio of one-day to championship games will be offset by a substantial rise in championship prize-money relative to one-day cricket, with the winners receiving possibly several hundreds of thousands compared with the current £70,000.

"It is our intention that the county championship should remain our pre-eminent competition," said the ECB chief executive, Tim Lamb. However, he emphasised the financial imperative of one-day cricket and its capacity to attract a younger audience.

The most radical proposals concern installing a system under which promising players are given the most competitive cricket possible at recreational level and a seamless transition to the first-class game lacking at present. The county board competition, an amalgamation of second XI and minor county cricket, is one idea.

More significant, though, may be the attempt to establish a network of premier leagues for club cricket — played to the Australian grade format — in addition to a premier club knock-out competition.

The shake-up

- Reduction of County Championship in 1998 from 17 to 14 matches. The 18 counties divide into three conferences. Sides play the six teams in conferences other than their own. Play-offs decide the championship and other placings.
- England play five or six Tests and six or seven one-day internationals each season.
- From 1999 a two-division 50-over National League (with promotion and relegation) replaces Sunday League and B&H Cup. Teams to play sides in own division twice and those in other division once: total of 25 matches.
- NatWest Trophy expanded and possibly reduced to 50 overs.
- Merge County second XI programme and minor counties. Introduce 38-side championship.
- A national network of premier leagues for the top club sides by 1999. Also a national knockout competition.
- Make all U17 and U19 county representative cricket two-day, one-innings matches.